

1895.

NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC PETITIONS M TO Z COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF) ON THE PETITION OF JOHN EVANS AND 667 OTHERS, AND SEVENTY-FIVE SIMILAR PETITIONS, AS PER ATTACHED SCHEDULE, TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE AND APPENDIX.

Report brought up 24th October, 1895, and ordered to be printed, together with Minutes of Evidence.

REPORT.

The Committee has the honour to report as follows:—

1. That seventy-six petitions, representing 15,498 signatories, from all the provincial districts of the colony, dealing with the introduction of the Irish National Scripture Lesson-books into the State schools have been referred to the Committee.

2. That the petitions pray generally—(a) That the Education Act should be amended to effect the purpose of the petitioners; (b) that the religious instruction required should be given by the State teachers; (c) that the text-books should be the Irish National Scripture Lesson-books; (d) that conscience clauses should be inserted to meet the views of teachers and pupils objecting to the instruction; (e) that a Bill dealing with the subject should be introduced this session.

3. That, with a view of supplying information of a reliable nature to your honourable House, the Committee invited leading members of the various religious denominations in Wellington, gentlemen interested in education, and office-bearers of societies for promoting the reading of Scripture in the State schools, to attend and give evidence on the subject.

4. That, as a result of the invitations, the following gentlemen appeared and gave evidence before the Committee: The Right Rev. Dr. Wallis, Bishop of Wellington; the Rev. W. Baumber, representing the Wesleyans of New Zealand; the Rev. J. Guy, representing the Primitive Methodists; the Rev. R. Glasson, representing the Congregational Union of New Zealand; the Rev. James Paterson, representing the Presbyterians of New Zealand; the Rev. Van Staveren, representing the Jewish Church in New Zealand; Mr. Grundy, Headmaster, Clyde Quay Public School, representing the New Zealand Educational Institute; Mr. Clement Watson, Headmaster, Te Aro Public School, also representing the New Zealand Educational Institute; Major-General Schaw, C.B., representing the Wellington Scripture Text-book Society; and Mr. Robert Lee, Chief Inspector to the Wellington Education Board. In addition to the examination of these witnesses, communications have passed between the Committee and Archbishop Redwood, of the Roman Catholic Church, and the evidence and correspondence is attached hereto for the information of the members of your honourable House.

5. (1.) The witnesses were almost unanimous in repudiating any charge against our educational system of being devoid of moral training for the young; several spoke in warm commendation of the ethics inculcated, and the charge of the system being a godless one was repudiated by all who did not limit the definition of "godless" to the absence of Biblical extracts. (2.) Valuable though conflicting evidence will be found regarding the benefits anticipated from the mere reading of passages of Scripture without comment: to allow the teachers to explain passages would inevitably lead to sectarianism. At the present time religious instruction may be given outside of school-hours, and has been tried with varying success. (3.) The evidence of the Rev. Van Staveren clearly proves that the members of the Jewish persuasion would view the introduction of the text-books with grave disapprobation. The telegram received from Archbishop Redwood is as follows: "Catholic sentiment opposed to plan *re* Bible-reading as solution of educational difficulty." The majority of the other religious denominations represented considered that the introduction of the Irish National Scripture Lesson-books would strengthen the claims of the Roman Catholics for State aid for their denominational schools.

6. The evidence also goes to show that the reading of the Irish National Scripture Lesson-books would act prejudicially to teachers, in that the religious views of candidates would be debated when appointments were being made, it being only natural that parents should desire to have the supervision of Scripture-reading in the hands of those with whose particular views they concur.

That, after having carefully considered the evidence placed before them, the Committee has no recommendation to make.

24th October, 1895.

R. MEREDITH, Chairman.

SCHEDULE of PETITIONS praying that the Irish National Scripture Lesson-books may be used in the Public Schools of the Colony, &c.

Nos. and Names of Petitioners.	Nos. and Names of Petitioners.
131. L. M. Ludbrook and 419 others.	429. W. F. Knight and 29 others.
141. D. Kellahan and 130 others.	455. R. Groves and 67 others.
179. J. McFarlane and 436 others.	300. J. O. Batchelor and 143 others.
251. G. Miller and 109 others.	424. Kate Colegrove and 524 others.
451. C. Sim and 15 others.	323. H. Stebbings and 188 others.
452. W. Anderson and 13 others.	333. D. Morris and 98 others.
453. John Evans and 667 others.	408. R. Robinson and 20 others.
292. S. Burnside and 532 others.	411. Rev. A. Dasent and 146 others.
339. A. Telfar and 766 others.	367. Henry Jay and 64 others.
353. C. A. Dawson and 125 others.	370. Alice Ronaldson and 473 others.
368. Jos. Ambury and 51 others.	372. Rev. C. A. Tisdall and 826 others.
369. John Hendrie and 61 others.	374. W. M. Hannay and 211 others.
398. Charles Clark and 313 others.	376. E. Thornton and 572 others.
410. A. Martin and 180 others.	277. Alfred Andrews and 277 others.
438. D. Crawford and 130 others.	399. W. H. Diddams and 181 others.
465. W. Hanson and 239 others.	270. Rev. A. S. J. Jones.
467. John Barr and 915 others.	373. Rev. J. Jones and 368 others.
481. H. D. A. Major and 28 others.	294. Rev. A. Twogood and 275 others.
478. H. P. Coux and 208 others.	309. A. Parker and 27 others.
472. Rev. J. Headrick and 35 others.	340. J. M. Devenish and 102 others.
406. E. A. Clarke and 33 others.	357. W. Davis and 504 others.
407. George Elliot and 117 others.	285. J. Gibbons and 86 others.
378. T. A. Coleman and 39 others.	286. D. H. Jenkins and 129 others.
380. R. Markham and 68 others.	317. R. Harrison and 204 others.
381. R. M. Ryburn and 49 others.	327. W. H. Philips and 132 others.
425. J. E. Fox and 34 others.	338. Rev. R. Hermon and 204 others.
295. C. Worboys and 89 others.	435. A. Orr and 48 others.
422. F. Chapman and 7 others.	421. R. M. Paton and 269 others.
423. H. F. Gordon and 29 others.	329. P. A. Branfil and 1,699 others.
409. Rev. J. W. Chapman and 88 others.	393. Rev. J. A. Asher and 154 others.
282. F. G. Westenra and 299 others.	473. J. Stevenson and 76 others.
315. C. C. Harper and 247 others.	474. James Allan and 81 others.
341. G. C. Williams and 31 others.	509. Rev. J. Johnston and 29 others.
342. T. Tanner and 49 others.	510. Rev. P. Ramsay and 38 others.
343. Rev. S. Williams and 94 others.	511. H. Cochrane and 331 others.
313. W. H. Randerson and 32 others.	493. G. MacMurray and 83 others.
314. T. J. Wills and 35 others.	512. Annie E. Chrystal and 159 others.
355. C. L. Tuke and 48 others.	513. Charles Hurst and 59 others.

PETITION.

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives, in Parliament assembled.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF THE UNDERSIGNED HUMBLY SHEWETH,—

1. That it is desirable that the Education Act should be so amended as to provide for religious instruction in schools.
2. That the instruction should be given by the teachers.
3. That the text-book should be the Irish National School-book of Scriptural Lessons.
4. That there should be a conscience clause for both teachers and children.
5. That a Bill to give effect to the above proposals will be introduced into Parliament this session; and your petitioners humbly request that your honourable House will take the same into your consideration, and pass the Bill in such form as your honourable House shall deem fit, so as to establish a system of religious instruction in the public schools of the colony.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

WEDNESDAY, 16th OCTOBER, 1895. (Mr. MEREDITH, Chairman.)

Rev. J. GUY examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] I understand you are a Minister of the Primitive Methodist Church, and that you appear before the Committee to make a statement in reference to the introduction of the "Irish National Scripture Lesson-books" into the State schools of the colony?—Yes.

2. Will you be good enough to proceed?—First of all, I would like to put myself clearly before the Committee: I would like to know, therefore, whether I am asked to appear here to give my own personal opinion about the books, or the opinion, so far as I know it, of the Primitive Methodist Church?

3. I think that of the Church with which you are associated. We have no objection to your opinion as a representative man; but we understand that you are here more particularly to represent the Church of which you are a minister?—I may state, for the information of the Committee, that the question has not been before our annual Conference in any official way, so that our Church has not given an expression of its opinion on the subject; but, in our last Conference, our retiring President during his address spoke against interfering with the present system of education. I can quote his words if the Committee desire that I should do so.

4. If his words are of authority with your denomination I think it would be an advantage if you were to quote his words?—The remarks were received with applause in the Conference, and have not been altered since. I took an extract from his address—the annual address delivered by the retiring President of the Primitive Methodist Conference, held in January of the present year: "It is a common thing to pass resolutions at church assemblies requesting that the Bible be introduced into our public schools. In my opinion, we should be careful as to what change we would effect in our present system. We do not want denominational or sectarian schools supported by Government. We have little sympathy with the cry of 'godless schools' echoed so frequently in certain quarters. Our schools are not godless." These remarks were, as I have said, received with applause, and they have not been controverted in any way since, either in the ordinary newspapers or in the pages of our church paper. I may state that in reference to this question we are divided as a Church. Although no vote has been taken in the Conference, we know that some of our ministers and laymen are in favour of introducing religious instruction into the State schools. A large number of our leading ministers and laymen, however, are in favour of things remaining as they are. The reasons for this are, as often quoted: (1.) The undesirability of in any way interfering with the integrity of the present educational system. (2.) The undesirability of bringing religious differences into school life. (3.) The undesirability of applying anything approaching to religious tests to teachers who may come before the Boards for employment in the schools under their charge. I do not know whether the Committee would care to have the opinion of one of our leading laymen on this question, which opinion was publicly given upon the occasion of the commencement of the agitation in favour of introducing the Irish Scripture Lesson-books, in the year 1893: "Extract from an article on 'Bible-reading in our Common Schools,' published in the *New Zealand Primitive Methodist* for July, 1893, by Mr. David Goldie, of Auckland: 'We trust, therefore, that our Nonconformist ministers will act with caution, and not allow themselves to become the mere catspaws of certain sections of the Christian Church, who are apparently anxious to use them to further their own interests and to destroy our present excellent system of education.'"

5. Would you take these opinions as the views of a large body of the Primitive Methodist Church in New Zealand?—Yes. When I was asked to enter this movement which is being carried on in this City of Wellington, I attended the first meeting, but did not feel free to go on to the Committee appointed, as I had not read the Irish National Scripture Lesson-books, and therefore I abstained from going on the Committee that was then appointed. I have only had in my hands three copies of the book. Although I have expressed a certain sympathy with the introduction of elementary Scripture teaching into the State schools, this Irish text-book does not come up to my ideal. If anything were to be done in this direction, I thought it might be done by historical sketches introducing the facts from the Old and New Testaments. I am strongly of opinion that anything in the nature of religious education cannot be given in the public schools of the colony, for that involves religious tests. With a view to find out the feeling of the churches in my care, in Wellington, I called the officials together and laid the question before them. They resolved that, as the Conference had not dealt with the question of religious education, they would not go into it. That is about the attitude of the local Primitive Methodist Churches in Wellington at the present time.

6. *Mr. McNab.*] What is the numerical strength, the number of adherents, of your Church in the colony?—Between 6,000 and 7,000.

7. Do you think that the introduction of these Scripture Lesson-books would tend to introduce denominationalism into the schools?—That is our opinion.

8. Do you think that if this text-book were introduced there would be any tendency, in the selection of teachers, to cause the School Committees to inquire what the teacher's religious views were?—I think so.

9. Do you think that would go so far as to cause them to inquire as to what denomination he belonged to?—I am not sure; because, as I look at the book, it appears to me a fair compromise between the two bodies—Romanists and Protestants.

10. Would a Protestant community be likely to appoint a Roman Catholic teacher to a school where there was to be only one teacher?—Speaking from the three books I have referred to, and from the information given in the notes, I do not think that a fair-minded Committee ought to have any difficulty. I could answer the question more fully if I had seen the whole set of books. Those that I have seen give no dogmatic instruction in the notes that ought to embarrass the Committee very much in choosing a teacher.

11. Do you know that there are some Roman Catholic teachers in the schools at the present time?—Yes.

12. Do you think that the children of New Zealand are irreverent in respect of religious instruction?—That is a wide question.

13. Do you think they are worse than the youth of the other colonies?—I think not, from what I hear.

14. *Mr. Willis.*] Do you think that Bible-reading in schools would serve any good purpose without interpretation; do you think that any good would be done by the mere reading?—I do not favour the reading of the Bible, as such, in the schools.

15. The question I asked you was: Would it, in your opinion, serve any good purpose without interpretation?—It would widen scripture knowledge for those scholars who did not get instruction at home.

16. I am not asking you with reference to general knowledge; I am looking at it from a Christian standpoint. Do you think that a moral effect would be produced?—To have much moral effect the book would have to be taught or read by a Christian man.

17. Do you think that reading the Bible, or, rather, Bible-reading, in this way would satisfy the Roman Catholics?—No.

18. You do not think that the priests would sanction the children being sent to these schools if there were Bible-reading in the schools?—No; I do not think so.

19. Do you think that supposing these books to be adopted, that admission of them to the schools would generally give full satisfaction: that there would not be a further demand for more religious instruction in the schools?—These questions are difficult to answer.

20. Do you think it would give full satisfaction to all denominations?—No; for this reason: One of the Anglican bishops recommended his people to accept it in the present distress. He did not explain what he meant by the "present distress," but we most of us understand it.

21. That half a loaf is better than no bread?—Possibly.

22. *Mr. Collins.*] Are you acquainted with the nature of the school reading-books as used in the State schools?—Yes; fairly well.

23. Do you consider that the character of the reading-lessons, both as regards prose and verse, sustains the charge that the present system of education in this colony is a "godless system"?—No; that is to say, I find nothing anti-religious in them.

24. You find that there are distinct references in them of a religious and even biblical character?—Yes.

25. This text-book, as regards the Roman Catholic body: Do you think that if it were introduced into our schools it would be held by them that they should not or could not take advantage of our system of State education, and they would therefore urge it as a further plea for a State grant?—I think it would.

26. It would strengthen their demand?—I think it would.

27. *Mr. Fraser.*] Have you had any experience of any attempts made to give religious instruction in the schools?—No personal experience.

28. Could you say whether or not it would be possible to give instruction to the children in the schools out of school-hours?—I could not say; but I could give you the experience of a friend in Auckland belonging to the Presbyterian body who had a good deal of experience.

29. But your own opinion is that the mere Bible-reading in schools without comment would not be of any service, as religious instruction?—Perhaps I should not answer the question just in that form. It would be of some service.

30. Well, without being of any material service it would not accomplish what the ardent supporters of this movement want?—It would be of some service in the way of general scripture information and morals, but it would not go higher than that.

31. It would not, in your opinion give effect to the purpose of religious instruction?—I do not think it would; it might be a help to it; but without comment of some kind it would be of little service as religious instruction.

32. Do you object to Bible-reading as a part of religious teaching in schools, or is it only to this text-book ("The Irish National Scripture Lesson-books") as religious instruction in State schools?—I object to religious teaching in the schools. I am not in favour of introducing the whole Bible into the schools. I have, I think, already stated that as a text-book this particular book does not come up to my idea of what a Scripture lesson-book should be. It follows almost word for word the authorised version or the Douay version. If a change is to come at all, I imagine a text-book compiled in a popular way, and not following so closely the words of either the authorised or the Douay version.

33. Do you think that if this text-book were introduced into the public schools of this colony, it would be the thin-end of the wedge towards bringing about in the future denominational education?—That is how many of our people regard it.

34. *Mr. E. M. Smith.*] I judge from your answers that you are under the impression that it is better to retain our present system, and that the introduction of the Bible and religious instruction

were better left out?—Yes; in my opinion religion can only be taught effectively by a religious man.

35. That is the only way that religious teaching would be acceptable to you?—Were it introduced the State would only be embarrassed with the attempt to give religious teaching in the schools. Bible-teaching means comment, as a member of the Committee has said.

36. *The Chairman.*] Have you any experience among the young people; if so, is it your opinion that Sunday-schools, Bible-classes, Endeavour Societies, domestic influences, are not sufficient to meet religious requirements?—Yes, I think they are, or should be, sufficient to meet the religious requirements of the colony.

37. According to your knowledge, has the agitation for the introduction of the Irish National Scripture Lesson-books been got up by the clergy or by the people of the Church generally?—Any communications I have received have been from the clergy: that is, outside my own church.

38. Is it your opinion that the introduction of the Irish Scripture Lesson-books would be a fair compromise, acceptable alike to the Roman Catholic and Protestant bodies?—I have no grounds on which I could give an opinion upon that.

39. Have you availed yourself, as a clergyman of the Primitive Methodist Church, of the opportunity that is given under the present Education Act, to give religious instruction in the State schools?—No.

Rev. H. VAN STAVEREN examined.

40. *The Chairman.*] The Committee understand that you are the Clergyman of the Jewish congregation in the City of Wellington?—Yes.

41. You are also Chairman of a City School Committee?—Yes; of the Terrace School—there are 560 children there.

42. You are aware that a number of petitions have reached this House, and are now before this Committee, having reference to the introduction of the Irish National Scripture Lesson-books into our State schools?—I am aware of that fact.

43. The Committee will be pleased to hear any statement you have to make on that subject.—I can give you, as well as my own opinion, the opinion of the Committee of the Terrace School, whose mouthpiece I was when representation was made to the Minister of Education by certain School Committees that this book should be introduced into our schools; I was deputed by the Committee of the Terrace School to oppose it as far as I possibly could. Moreover, the Headmaster of that school, and the teachers whom we consulted, all of whom are Protestant and Presbyterian (Protestant, at all events), and they with unanimous voice came to the conclusion that it would be pernicious to encourage religious instruction in the State schools of this colony either by Bible-reading or the introduction of this Irish National Scripture Lesson-book; that is, so far as our Terrace School is concerned, with which I am connected; without a single exception we all say it would be pernicious to the school. As far as the Jewish Church is concerned, of which I am the head in New Zealand, I can say that our unanimous opinion is that it would be a blot on our educational system were we to introduce into so good a system this Irish text-book, which, as you must be aware, would simply leave a “skim-milk” impression on the minds of intelligent children. I have gone through it, and can come to no other conclusion than this: that it would be a real shame to introduce it, for the effect can only be to return to a state of things that where children have sat side by side for many years this denominational element comes in, and they will say to each other, “I cannot sit here and listen to that book read;” while some would say, “I cannot come to school because my parents desire that I should not be there while it is read; and others that they must, as soon as they can, get away from the control of teachers who would impregnate their minds; and most of them would say, “I cannot accept this skim-milk system of this insipid book as a doctrine for my future life.” This book teaches a few morals and a few stories that are supposed to convey morals to the minds of children; but the law—the laws for the government of our lives—which should be immutable and eternal, are shut out of view altogether. How are masters or teachers in schools able to teach anything without interpretation? They might quote many Hebrew words from the Old Testament, or the New (for we have a New Testament too), or from the Greek, or from the Bible in the vernacular; but those beautiful passages, which are at the root of human life, are they to be left without interpretation? How can you teach them without interpretation? If you desire religious instruction in the schools you cannot have it without interpretation. To introduce this Irish National Scripture Lesson-book will simply mean that we will again have denominationalism, which I think all the members sent from the country to Parliament should be very much against. We do not desire to revert to the old system of denominationalism. That would simply mean that the Education Act, under which an admirable system of education has grown up, will have to be amended to give place to such a book as this. I need not tell you that, so far as the Jewish Church is concerned, we do not care much whether this book is introduced or not, for we will simply take our children away, as the Catholics would do, and, like them, agitate as much as possible to get a grant in aid of our own denominational schools, which would be no more than right. Why should I send my children to a school where doctrines are taught which I do not believe in? Why should my children, if they have the capacity to become teachers, be deprived of the opportunity of teaching that is now given in the public schools? Would they not have to say, “There is no use my trying to get into employment of that kind for I cannot be a teacher?” The excellent teaching now given in the schools will be impaired. Why should we have to put up with doctrines which other people desire to inculcate? This proposal is entirely pernicious, and I trust that honourable members of this House, who have been sent here by the constituencies, will oppose it as far as possible. I believe it is only a few people in New Zealand, and not the majority of the people of New Zealand, who desire to introduce a new system.

44. *Mr. McNab.*] Do many of the children of your denomination who attend the State schools become teachers? Some of them do intend to become teachers.

45. So that if anything which would destroy the secular character of the schools were introduced your children would be withdrawn?—Yes, most decidedly.

46. Do you think this lesson-book would have that effect?—I do not know whether this lesson-book will have that effect, for you must be aware that in many schools where it has been used it has been withdrawn or modified; it is too insipid altogether.

47. Do you say it will have no effect, or that it will reintroduce denominationalism?—Yes; either it will have no effect or it will bring back denominationalism.

48. *Mr. Collins.*] Do you think that this agitation originated with the people or with the clergy?—With the clergy, and only a few of them.

49. Do you think this would be regarded as a satisfactory solution of the religious difficulty?—Certainly not.

50. Would it be the thin end of the wedge to get in denominationalism?—That is all.

51. You say if they introduce this book, the Jews, who do not care much about it one way or other, will withdraw their children and agitate for a grant for their own denominational schools?—Most decidedly.

52. And other bodies, in your opinion, will do the same thing?—Most decidedly; it will be but right.

53. Would it strengthen the Roman Catholic claim for State aid?—Certainly it would.

54. You think they would have conscientious grounds to go upon?—They would have a right. Only yesterday, in my capacity of Chairman of the Benevolent Institution of this city, a child named Dillon was claimed by the Sisters of Mercy as not being able to receive a Catholic education under the care of the Institution. I had to intrust the child to the care of a very respectable person who took the greatest care of the child; she brought the child in and it looked in splendid health; but they set up their denominational right.

55. Do you think it would be wise or proper to add to the school syllabus of a national character any item that would compel a number of people to absent themselves from that particular school?—You must know that would not conduce to the benefit of the school; it would be quite the reverse; no doubt many would absent themselves if any text-book or lesson-book were introduced which they did not believe in.

56. Have you read the present school readers?—I have, many of them.

57. Do you think they are open to the charge of being "godless"?—That is entirely false. I can hardly express the disgust I felt when I read that lying statement.

58. *Mr. Fraser.*] Do I understand you that your objection to the introduction of this book does not apply to this book alone, but to any conceivable book that would impart religious instruction in the schools?—My objection is to the introduction of religion into the school syllabus.

59. If there were a general agreement to allow religious instruction to be the work of those having authority to impart it?—I object to the introduction of religious education into the schools.

60. Do you not think it would be possible to compile a work that would embody the agreement of the various sects? Do you think that could be done?—There is only one man I know who would attempt it—one man who believes in himself (*Mr. Coleman Phillips*)—he has compiled a book which he entitled "A Book for the Church of God in New Zealand."

61. *The Chairman.*] You say you are Chairman of the Committee of one of the city schools?—Yes.

62. Has your Committee, to your knowledge, been approached by any clergymen residing in the City of Wellington with the view of giving religious instruction under the present Act?—You know that all Committeemen have been buttonholed more or less by clergymen?

63. You do not understand my question?—I do. You must know that all members of Committees have been buttonholed by the various clergymen who desire to introduce this pernicious system.

64. What I want to know is whether your Committee has been approached in reference to a clergyman attending your school to give religious instruction under the "present Act" before or after school-hours?—Never. I consider there is quite enough elasticity under the present Act to impart religious instruction in the schools if required.

65. You have stated in your evidence that you consulted the teaching staff of your school, and obtained an opinion from them as to the introduction of this book into the school?—Yes.

66. Did they express any opinion for or against it?—Against it—very much against it.

67. What does your Committee think?—They hold the same opinion, and they sent me to the Hon. Mr. Reeves to be their mouthpiece.

Mr. W. T. GRUNDY examined.

68. *The Chairman.*] We understand that you are the Headmaster of Clyde Quay State School?—Yes.

69. And you are Secretary to the New Zealand Educational Institute?—Yes.

70. The Committee will have much pleasure in hearing you make a statement in reference to the question of the introduction of the Irish National Scripture Lesson-book into the State schools of this colony. I would ask you, before you begin to make your statement, what is the number of scholars attending your school?—800.

We will now hear your statement.

Mr. Grundy: The first point I would like to emphasize is this: that it appears from the teacher's point of view that the introduction of this book into the schools will be the first step towards the commencement of denominational education. I will, if the Committee will allow me,

state why I think so. It seems to me that certain sections of the community—the Jews and Roman Catholics, for instance, many of whom are in our schools—would object to this kind of religious teaching, and, consequently, the State having recognised this book and placed it in the ordinary syllabus, it would be regarded as religion, and there would be further calls upon the State to give additional relief in that particular direction. As to the teachers, I myself as a teacher would object to such a backward step from our present system, which is working admirably. The only result of this movement can be denominational education, to which it would certainly, I think, lead. In order to strengthen what I have just said, I might state that I have heard a clergyman declare that he was prepared to accept this book as a temporary measure, but that he was not prepared to accept it as the whole of his demand; that he would be satisfied with the introduction of this book into the schools until denominational education should be recognised by the State; until he had his own school in his own parish, and the children should be taught the Church Catechism. I would also like to point out, from the teacher's point of view, that this book in the schools will be useless unless it is taught by some one that has a conviction in respect to the religious instruction which it purports to give, for a man must be thoroughly convinced as to what he is teaching if his instruction is to be effective. Now, the teachers in our State schools have not received that training in religious teaching that would warrant them in giving religious instruction in the schools. Then, again, there are teachers among us who have conscientious objections. There is, I admit, a conscience clause, which will have some effect in protecting the conscientious teacher; but, with your permission, I will state a case. Take a country school: a teacher has sole charge of a school; he or she conscientiously objects to the reading of this book; he or she may be a Roman Catholic or a Jew or Jewess. The result would be in such a case that the book would not be used. The people of that district, if they were in earnest in requiring this modicum of religious instruction, would make things very unsatisfactory to that teacher. I do not think it is fair that a teacher should be placed in that position. I should like to say that, to my mind, the conscience clause in the present Act meets all the circumstances likely to arise if clergymen will only take advantage of it. There are many teachers who have strong religious convictions, and would be glad to give the clergyman assistance in many ways in the direction of religious education. But we are never asked. The clergy have, in most cases, allowed this matter of religious instruction to lie by, and have not taken advantage of the provisions in the present Act; and consequently I do not think it is fair to ask that we should do what they have failed to do—or, rather, failed in the attempt to do. I would like here to emphasize the fact that bitterness will be created in districts where teachers have conscientiously objected to carry out this instruction. That, I consider, from a teacher's point of view, is a very strong point. Then, I would ask whether this book is to be read or to be taught? For there is a great distinction here. If it is to be taught we must explain the matter. Here, I think, a great danger comes in. If we have to explain things you will have great difficulty in preventing dogmatic teaching. However carefully the book may be compiled, there are points that will be raised which it will be very difficult to deal with. If it is only to be read it will be valueless. The teacher will be sorry to have the book read to the children and to be not allowed to explain. From the teacher's point of view that will be rather stupid. Then, again, it will be a pity to disturb the harmony of the schools. We have now seated on our school-benches children of all denominations and all sects—Jews, Roman Catholics, and others. To my mind, this will disturb the harmony which at present exists in the schools. It would be better to leave religious instruction to the clergy of the churches. I would like also to put before the Committee one or two more practical views of the matter. It is proposed to give half an hour's religious teaching per day. That will be two hours and a half a week. Practically, then, there will be given more time to this subject than to three such other subjects as history, geography, and science, which would run into about two hours and a half. We will be required to give two hours and a half of the week to this one subject. This will take up a great deal of the time now available for ordinary instruction. I should like to ask what is to go out of the syllabus to make way for this. We have already heard that the syllabus is overburdened with the subjects put into it. We will have very great difficulty in meeting the requirements of the State in other directions if we are to give half an hour a day to religious instruction. Then, under the conscience clause, many careless parents will avail themselves of that for various reasons, so that after a time this will have the effect of disarranging the school work. Then, again, this book is not suitable to all children; to the younger children it will be of no value, for it can only be a reading-book for the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Standards. What, then, are you going to do with the younger children?—you must give them moral instruction. That is the difficulty; you are practically limited by this book. It will possibly resolve itself into this: that this book will become in the hands of the teacher an ordinary reading-book. But it is not suitable for an ordinary reading-book. It is objectionable, inasmuch as the teacher, however anxious to do his duty as a school teacher, will not be allowed to explain the subject-matter, and at the same time if the school is to be examined on it he will have to get it up to the satisfaction of the Inspector. If you make it a part of the school curriculum it must be examined on. This is an objection. I do not know that I can give the Committee any information that should make me detain them any longer.

71. *Mr. McNab.*] You are a teacher having a wide experience; do you think the children of this colony are irreverent, or disobedient, or rebellious in their disposition and manners?—I can speak strongly on that point; first, because I was a denominational teacher at Home. I had charge of a large school in Birmingham, and was Headmaster of St. Phillip's National School. I, therefore, say plainly, that I have found the children of New Zealand very amenable to discipline; very conciliatory in their conduct and behaviour, and altogether superior, from the teacher's point of view, to the children he has to deal with at Home. I have said this to clergymen in New Zealand, and I say it now without fear of contradiction. I have observed and have had to deal with in New Zealand less irreverence, less rebellion, less disobedience, less misconduct generally than I had to deal

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.

100. *Mr. Collins.*] Do you think that the imputation put upon the schools that they are "godless" is justified; are there any just grounds for it?—No; we provide against that in the syllabus by lessons inculcating morals, such as obedience to parents and other matters of that kind. These lessons are illustrated and taught right through the course of the year; it is done in my own school; these points are attended to in most of our State schools.

101. *Mr. Willis.*] With regard to the school-books, do you not consider that they exhort to good conduct, moral and religious?—Yes; they give a good tone to the character of the teaching.

102. You think that should do away with the charge that there is nothing of a religious character in the teaching?—Yes.

103. There is no ground for any imputation that they are of an irreligious character?—No.

Mr. CLEMENT WATSON examined.

104. *The Chairman.*] You are the Headmaster of Te Aro State School?—Yes.

105. What is the number of scholars?—About 600.

106. How many years have you been a public-school teacher?—About twenty.

107. How many years have you spent in New Zealand?—All of that.

108. Do you appear to give evidence conjointly with Mr. Grundy in connection with the New Zealand Educational Institute?—Yes.

109. Also as the Headmaster of one of the largest of our city schools?—Yes.

110. The Committee will be happy to hear what you have to say as to the probable effects of the introduction of the Irish National Scripture Lesson-book as a text-book into the State schools.—You would like me to make some sort of statement. I will be as brief as I can. I have made a few notes of my own thoughts upon the subject. In the first place, I have to express my fears as to the danger of meddling at all with our present educational system, which, I think, all will admit is doing admirable work. It is in no way interfering with religious work or movement of any kind. There is nothing atheistic or opposed to religion in it. Some people, and many of the clergy, seem to assume that we have usurped their functions. I can only say we are doing what was never done before—we are teaching everybody. I think that if this book is introduced into the schools public instruction will be beset with all the difficulties that beset State education from the first. If I am asked what is likely to be the result I can only say that it is likely to lead to further demands, and that those who urge this movement hope that it will lead to something further—that is, to denominational education. Introducing this book is a step in that direction. I think that the advocates of it believe that. That is my first objection to the introduction of this book into our State schools. My next objection, my strongest objection, is that, assuming the book to be introduced into our schools, it will fail of its object; but not before much injury shall have been done to the present system of education. This is not religious instruction of any kind; it is only a reading-book. If you want to teach religion that can only be done by the individual who is called to that duty, and enters upon that duty with a whole heart and a strong conviction. That is the only kind of religious instruction that can have any effect. You must not be afraid of offending people; you know you have a certain thing to do; you are impelled to teach, and teach you must. That is the heart and conviction which the man who would give religious instruction with effect must have. But this is a cold-blooded and perfunctory business; you have to read the book and not to comment on it: in fact, you do nothing. What must be the effect of that upon the mind of the child? I think that the introduction of this book will have an effect the opposite of that which its advocates expect. Instead of the Bible being looked upon with reverence it will simply become like any other school-book. Without interpretation or comment the average boy will look upon it as a fable, and when he leaves the school will regard it in that aspect; it will be nugatory entirely. There are hundreds of examples to test the probable effect of religious teaching such as is proposed by the introduction of this book into the schools. What is the result of the teaching of a minister of religion if his work is done in a perfunctory way? We know what that is. Personally I feel sure that the only religious teaching that "takes hold" of children is the religious instruction that is received at the mother's knee, or from a religious or spiritual adviser supported and approved by both parents. These are the only kinds of religious instruction likely to sink into the mind and influence the conduct of daily life. I am sure that the kind of instruction proposed by the introduction of this book will do no good at all. There has been an expression of opinion that the teachers ought to accept this book. I would point out to the Committee that the skill of the teacher is valueless in this matter. The effect of religious teaching depends, as I have said, upon conviction and the earnestness with which you get to work. We ordinary teachers are simply a kind of craftsmen as it were. It is argued that parents do not teach their children, and therefore something must be done. If you do what is now proposed you will not have the teacher in the place of the parent. The position in regard to religious instruction will be worse than it is now. The teacher is precluded from interpretation, and still you will say that the parents are the proper persons to teach religion to their young children. But the parent will say, "All that is done in the school, and I am relieved of all responsibility." That is a very serious aspect of this question. The State cannot possibly take the place of the parent or the true religious instructor. Then, I believe, it will introduce into the schools endless bitterness into the business connected with the control of the schools. You will have on the occasion of every Committee election, each sect trying to get a majority on the Committee for the express purpose of swaying the kind of instruction to be given. The teachers will be dragged into that, and so it will break up the harmony that now exists. You will find a school at this side of the town that gets to be regarded as Presbyterian, and at the other side Wesleyan, and the one in the centre Anglican. The discipline of the schools will be impaired by external influences. That will be a deplorable state of things. Surely it is an immense advantage now that the children of all parents of every class and denomination can sit together on the same school-benches without

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

the Rev. Mr. Coffey said he would not accept reading without comment; he must have dogmatic teaching.

122. *Mr. Willis.*] Have the clergy made any attempt to get religion imparted in the schools outside school-hours?—Not during the week. So far as I know they have never attempted under the conscience clause to establish classes; we could not refuse them if they did, there is provision in the present Act for it.

123. Is it a matter of convenience with them?—I should say so; they say the teacher must do it. That is undoubtedly the feeling in my Church.

124. Then, with regard to the morals of the children, do you find that you can depend on your children?—Yes; as a whole.

125. Generally speaking, you would say they have a good moral tone?—Very pleasing as a whole; but you will get bad eggs in every basket.

126. Have you seen a statement to the effect that, in consequence of the “godless” system, the morality of the children is not as good as it should be?—Constantly I have heard that; I have asked people why they said so, and sometimes got very absurd answers. I once asked a minister whether he considered that Catholic children made better citizens by the religious instruction they got, and he replied that they would not. I then asked him why, and he answered, “Because it is not the right kind of religion.”

127. Have you had experience of the other colonies, comparatively, where religious instruction is imparted in the State schools—New South Wales, for instance?—No; I have no experience as a teacher of anywhere but here.

128. You are quite satisfied with the moral tone of your children?—I am satisfied that what is now proposed will not improve it.

129. *Mr. Collins.*] Do you think that the introduction of this book will be likely to make parents take advantage of the conscience clause and withdraw their children from the school?—I think so.

130. Do you think it will introduce into the schools religious differences?—I am quite certain of it.

131. That it will tend to destroy the harmony of the present system?—That will be one of its effects.

132. Do you regard the intercourse of these children and parents of different denominations in connection with the schools as an advantage?—I think that is an admirable effect of the present system, the old denominational prejudice is dying out.

133. *Mr. Lang.*] It has been stated that among the children there is a great want of reverence: Supposing that to be so, do you think the introduction of this book will make any difference?—I do not think this text-book will have any effect at all; my private opinion is that it will tend to lower the estimation in which the Bible is held, and will become a mere school-book.

134. *Mr. Collins.*] Do you think it can be introduced without acting directly on the present system: would it be detrimental to the system?—If you are going to read this book during the school-hours something else must go out of the syllabus. If you take two hours and a half out of the week something else must go; two hours and a half is one-tenth of the time.

135. *The Chairman.*] Is it your opinion that the introduction of the “Irish National Scripture Lesson-book” would be a final solution of the religious question?—No; I am sure it will not; I am positive it will not.

136. You have stated that you are a member of the Anglican Church; have you heard or read the address which the Anglican Bishop of Wellington delivered on the 2nd October, 1895, and which was put in evidence yesterday? I will read the passage to you: “First, this application cannot be justly stigmatised as a compromise. We are giving up nothing which we either have or hope to have.”—That clearly points to the fact that this will be only the beginning.

137. Which must ultimately lead to what, in your opinion?—The “hope” for the return of denominationalism, by which they would have control of the school, or at any rate of the religious education in the school.

138. Do I understand you to say that 90 per cent. of those who signed the petition were not aware of the contents of the book?—I do not think it is possible they could have been aware of its contents: it was with great difficulty that I was able to get a copy.

139. Do I understand you that this series cannot be obtained from the booksellers in Wellington?—I do not think there is a copy left in any shop now; there have been only a few copies received here.

THURSDAY, 17th OCTOBER, 1895.

Rev. W. BAUMBER examined.

140. *The Chairman.*] After hearing evidence on Tuesday the Committee thought it advisable that the evidence should be taken down in shorthand, and accordingly the evidence was taken down in shorthand: therefore we have thought it only right and proper that the gentlemen who gave evidence on Tuesday might have the opportunity of repeating their evidence so that it might appear side by side in the minutes of evidence to be laid with the Committee’s report on the table of the House. (To the witness:) Is the Committee to understand that you appear here as the representative of the Wesleyan Church for the whole of New Zealand?—That is so, Mr. Chairman, I represent the Wesleyan Church throughout New Zealand, inasmuch as our Conference, which is the chief governing body of our Church in the colony, has for years been asking that some such change as this should be made in our national system of education. If you will allow me I will read a resolution come to in 1893 bearing on this question, which will show very clearly what the feeling of our Church is on this matter: “Whereas this Conference has for many years passed

resolutions in favour of the Bible in schools: it will gladly embrace the opportunity of co-operating with other religious bodies in their efforts to obtain some form of scripture-reading in our public schools, subject to a conscience clause, and appoints a Committee, to consist of . . . to confer and act with representatives of the Churches on the subject."

141. What is the date of that?—March, 1893.

142. Where was this Conference held?—In Dunedin. You see it is stated that for many years resolutions have been adopted in favour of the introduction of the Bible as a text-book into the schools. Every year since then a similar resolution has been passed by our Conference. So that this is no new thing. Those minutes from which I have read have been placed in the hands of the people of the Wesleyan Church throughout the colony by the Wesleyan Conference year by year. They have been read at our church meetings, and circulated for the use of the various congregations; and, so far as I know, there has not been a single voice heard in opposition to them. I take it, then, to be evident that these resolutions give the feeling of our Church in regard to this matter. There is a feeling on the part of a great many of our people that we are doing wrong to the children themselves by keeping the Bible out of the schools. In doing this we are educating but one side of their nature, to the neglect of the other, which is the more important. And, besides, we are doing wrong to the State; for if the State is educating the children in order to make them good citizens, then it is to the advantage of the State that this influence, which tends to make them good citizens, should be brought to bear on them during their education. That is the feeling of the Wesleyan Church on this subject. By refraining from bringing this influence to bear on them we are making our children into citizens who will not be so good as they otherwise would be.

143. Have you any further statement to make?—In addition to that I believe it to be the wish of a large majority of the people of the colony that this change should be made. Wherever there has been an opportunity for the people to give expression to their opinion such has proved to be the case. In Otago, some years ago, the people were asked to give a vote on this question: papers were sent round to the householders, and the vote proved to be a very large one in favour of religious instruction in the State schools. The minority was a very small one. The majority was, as I have stated, very large in favour of the change that is now asked for in the Bill that is before the House. I think it is impossible to look at the state of things in connection with the young people of the colony without desiring that some effort in this direction should be put forth. I rejoice in the fact that during recent years there has been a considerable improvement so far as juvenile crime is concerned. I do not think that criminally our people are worse than in other places; but, apart from direct crime, there is a great deal of irreverence among our young people; I am afraid there is also a great deal of immorality. One thing I am certain of: that there is a great deal of lewd and blasphemous talk to be overheard when passing any considerable number of them in the streets.

144. *Mr. Willis.*] Would that be caused by the exclusion of the Bible from the schools?—The Bible in the school would bring about a great improvement in that respect.

145. Do you think that Bible-reading in the school would serve any good purpose without any interpretation?—I believe it would. I believe it to be the Word of God, and I have no hesitation in saying that the result would be good.

146. But the question here is not so much as to the Bible in the school, as to the introduction into the schools of the Irish National Scripture Lesson-books; would the introduction of these books into the State schools serve any good purpose without interpretation?—Practically, it comes to the same thing, because the lessons in these text-books are really Bible lessons; they are the words of Scripture. I believe the Bible to be God's Word, and I believe that God, through His Word, can speak to the hearts and consciences of the children, apart from any human interpretation.

147. Do you think that Bible-reading would have any effect on Roman Catholic children going to the schools without the consent of their priests?—I am very doubtful about that. I am not in a position to answer that question.

148. You do not think it would do away with their demand for denominational teaching?—I do not think it would; they would not, however, have the same claim that they have at present; for one of the objections they have to the present system is that it is a "godless" system; whether true or not, that it is their objection. If this book is introduced, setting forth as it does God's influence over men through our Lord Jesus Christ, I do not think that their claim would exist any longer.

149. What do you mean by the phrase "godless education?—An education that does not set before the children the claims of God.

150. Have you read the books that are now used?—I have not read them through, though I know something about them.

151. Are you aware that there is running through the whole of these books teaching that might be clothed with Bible instruction?—I am aware that there is a high moral tone in many of the lessons; but that is not based on God's Word so far as I remember. There is a difference; there may be exceptional cases.

152. You said that boys and girls were wandering about at night: that there was a great deal of immorality, of lewd and blasphemous talk: do you know whether those boys and girls you refer to may be attending other schools; would that imply a charge against our town schools?—I do not say that that is a necessary result.

153. *Mr. Collins.*] Why did you mention it?—I mentioned it because it is a fact of our daily life.

154. *Mr. Willis.*] Do you think that if there were religious instruction in the schools the children would be better behaved than they are?—I would put it in this way, if you would allow me: I believe that if we had Bible-reading in the schools the effect would be to improve the conduct and manners of the children.

155. Do you say that the Roman Catholic children are better in these respects than the children of the State schools?—To answer that question would lead me into a theological discussion. I do not think that things are quite equal in the matter.

156. You would not deny that the teaching there is of a Christian character?—It is strictly Christian, as Christianity is received by the Roman Catholic Church; but it does not follow necessarily that it is of a Bible character.

157. But it must be of a religious character in any case?—It is religious.

158. You would not like to say that they were any better than the children of our State schools?—No, I should not like to say so. In fact, to go by statistics, I am afraid it is the other way.

159. But, putting aside any difference of creed, you must admit that it is Christian teaching?—It is religious teaching, as distinct from Biblical. I do not think that moral and religious teaching need necessarily be Biblical; but I should prefer to see the Bible in the schools.

160. How would you get on with the system you propose if there is to be no interpretation, but only reading the Bible?—From what I said just now you will understand that I believe God to be capable of moving the minds and hearts of the children through the influence of His own word.

161. How does that apply to the Catholic schools?—The Bible, so far as I know, is not used in the Catholic schools.

162. *Mr. Collins.*] You have stated that under our present system we are educating only one side, by which I take it that you mean that we are teaching the intellectual side only?—Specially the intellectual; not the religious or spiritual side.

163. Are you acquainted with the nature of the reading-books used in our schools, and, if so, would you not consider that a great portion of them are distinctly in the direction of educating in both religious and moral truths?—I believe that morality is taught in those books.

164. Would you not find that some of these lessons are distinctly on Biblical subjects, and that they are taught by the teachers in a manner that is perfectly understood by the children; if so, would you not consider that these lessons now given do in themselves teach morality and religion?—To some extent.

165. You say that it is on the score of good citizenship that it is necessary that this change should be made. Do you consider that the children of New Zealand compare unfavourably with other countries where religious education is given?—I cannot say.

166. Do you know by statistical information?—No, I have no statistical information on the subject.

167. Do you know that it can be proved by statistics that our children are better than the children of those countries where religious instruction is given?—I can quite believe that. We are living under more favourable conditions in New Zealand.

168. Do you know Queensland at all?—I do not know what the statistics are with regard to Queensland.

169. If I state that, statistically, it can be shown that our children are less criminal than those of countries where religious instruction is given in the schools, would you say that is outside of the education question?—Yes.

170. Would you say you attribute that to New Zealand people as a whole being a church-going people, and, in connection with that, a certain influence is brought to bear on our young people?—A large majority of our children are going to our Sunday-schools; in that way the majority are having some religious instruction given to them, and the result has been very marked.

171. When you said it was impossible to look at the children of the colony without seeing the necessity for some such change as this which is now proposed, did you intend to convey the impression that there was something wrong or exceptional?—Not exceptional. I have said again and again that I did not think they were worse than the children of other places; but that I believed they could be made very much better.

172. I am trying to compare the conditions where the religious instruction you ask for is given with the conditions here, where the instruction is entirely secular. I want to show that you are asking us to alter our system, which shows better results than that in other places where religious instruction is given in the State schools?—I think I said that in New Zealand there are exceptionally favourable conditions of life as compared with places where the circumstances of the population have a tendency to produce a larger amount of crime than we have here.

173. Do you think that the introduction of this text-book into our schools will satisfy the Jews resident in the colony?—I do not know that it ought to dissatisfy them, inasmuch as the conscience clause will be a safeguard for them.

174. Do you think it will satisfy the Roman Catholics?—I do not know that it will satisfy them; but they will not be in a worse condition than they are.

175. Do you think that will satisfy the rationalistic laity?—I do not think so.

176. Here we have three sections of the community who are dissatisfied with this proposed change?—They are about 20 per cent. of the whole population.

177. They would have to take advantage of the conscience clause?—Yes.

178. Will not this destroy our national system of education?—I do not think so. After looking at the whole subject I am of opinion that if we wish to preserve our "national" system of education we shall have to resort to some such change as this; I believe this is the feeling of the people.

179. Do you think it would be wise to order it in such a way that a large number of the community will have to take advantage of the conscience clause?—Yes; if by so doing the far greater number will be advantaged. If we are better in respect to criminal statistics, the question of crime is not the only thing that presses for consideration.

180. *Mr. McNab.*] You take your stand on this: that the Bible is the inspired word of God, and ought to be read to the children?—Yes.

181. That is practically your statement?—Yes.

182. Then, why do you not advocate the admission of the Bible itself, in the place of extracts from the Bible?—Personally, I have no objection to the Bible being introduced into the schools; but here, in connection with this text-book, we have arranged to our hands what will be suitable to our purpose, and we have agreed to ask for this.

183. You say it will be suitable to your purpose; do you know how many signatures were attached to the petition: have you ever seen it?—Yes; I cannot say how many signatures were attached; a large number.

184. Do you know whether the signatories ever saw any copies of this book?—I really do not know; but I think they signed the petition because they understood the lessons were to be lessons taken from the Bible.

185. They signed the petition on that ground?—Yes.

186. Do you think that some of the chapters of the Bible—take, for instance, the third chapter of Genesis—suppose boys and girls to ask the meaning of certain passages: do you think the teacher would be wise in refraining from the explanation asked?—In a case of that kind a great deal depends on the teacher. I can understand an explanation that would not be pleasant, and I can understand an explanation given to which no one would object: the teacher need not answer the question; the lesson will be read according to the regulations which are provided.

187. Do you not think the effect would be undesirable if the teacher said, "I am not allowed to explain any chapter beyond what is involved in the regulations"?—I do not think there is any necessity. I should myself be prepared to answer any questions that might be asked. I think it might be done without being offensive to any one.

188. Do you think that a teacher would be likely to bring himself into contact with parents who held particular views in regard to it?—Some people might object.

189. You admit, then, there would be some element of disagreement if it were attempted to explain it?—Our book does not provide for explanation by the teacher.

190. What portion of the daily work of the school would you suggest should be dropped to make provision for this reading-lesson?—I do not know that I am sufficiently versed in the school curriculum to answer that question. It would not be necessary that any great change should be made.

191. Now, in regard to the appointment of teachers, do you think that it would influence the School Committee in the selection of a teacher, whether the candidate had particular religious views?—I think it would of necessity, to some extent—that is, the Committee would not be likely to consider a teacher suitable whose moral character was not good; but I do not think that beyond that the Committee ought to interfere.

172. Would it not cause them to inquire what denomination he belonged to?—Not more than is done at present; I do not think so.

193. Would it cause them to inquire whether he were Protestant or Catholic?—It might do so, but I do not think that would be done any more than it is at present; it is sometimes done at present.

194. Do you think there would be additional leverage brought to bear?—There ought not to be.

195. You know that some schools have Roman Catholic teachers at present?—Yes.

196. Who give complete satisfaction?—Yes.

197. Do you think there is any want of reverence in the children of the colony attending the public schools; that the reading of this book in the schools would have a beneficial effect, and that the book will make a difference in their behaviour?—I think it would make a difference; I think we are not likely to have reverence for anything if not for God; the fact that God's Word is acknowledged and read in our schools will have a tendency to produce reverence in the minds of the scholars; if you have reverence for God you will soon get reverence for man.

198. The people signing this petition: do you think if they get this they will be satisfied; will they not require something else afterwards; do you think this is merely getting the thin end of the wedge in, so as to enable them to ask for more?—I do not think it. I know there are people in New Zealand who are very strong for denominationalism; but if this is introduced it will make denominationalism less possible than it is to-day, I feel very strongly on this point.

199. *Mr. Fraser.*] Our present system is free?—Yes, so far as money payment is concerned.

200. It is open to all Churches and sects?—Yes.

201. It is open to all, because there is nothing in the syllabus to prevent any children of all denominations going to them?—I suppose it is so; but at the same time you must know that a considerable portion of the community say there is a lack of something in the syllabus which the children who go there ought to have.

202. Is there anything that would prevent parents—parents of any denomination—sending their children to the schools as they are now?—Nothing that I know of.

203. If any text-book that would be objectionable is introduced, would the schools be as free as they are now?—They would, according to the present Bill, inasmuch as there is a conscience clause; you cannot do without a conscience clause.

204. Would the introduction of Bible-reading into the school syllabus, or of any text-book that was objected to by one or more sections of the community, leave the schools as open as they are at present?—Not if you make no reference to the conscience clause.

205. Are you not aware that in regard to the conscience clause great objections are raised to it, as causing invidious distinctions?—It may make such distinction, but not of necessity.

206. You do not know?—Not of necessity.

207. You have not heard?—No; I have not heard.

208. You admitted, in answer to Mr. McNab, that it might be advisable, occasionally, for the

teacher to explain certain passages in that text-book?—I said that I myself would have no hesitation to do it.

209. That implied that it might be advisable?—I might think it advisable.

210. That presumes that liberty was to be given to explain what might appear obscure to the children? I think it amounted to that, though it does not give that liberty; it simply provides for reading, and then for asking certain questions, which are printed in the text-books.

211. Do you say that the advocates for the text-book would be satisfied that there should be no door open for any explanation?—That is our position distinctly.

212. They do not advocate that any permission should be given to explain any passage?—If they did that, they would open the way to denominational teaching at once. I would be opposed to that.

213. That would appear from your answers?—I certainly never intended that.

214. You said you did not think that the Jewish persuasion, and the members of some other persuasions, would object to the reading of this text-book?—I have no knowledge to that effect.

215. Do you know that in the evidence adduced before this Committee it is distinctly stated?—I should be prepared to accept it if stated by those who know. I am always ready to accept information from those who are better informed than I am.

216. *The Chairman.*] You stated that you were here to represent the Wesleyan Methodist Conference?—That is so. Allow me to explain: I am not here by request of the Conference. I say I represent them, inasmuch as year after year they had passed these resolutions.

217. The Wesleyan Methodist higher Courts are elected on a broad representative basis?—Not on the broad basis that we have in election to the House of Representatives; at the same time, I believe that the officials of our Church are representative in regard to such a question as this.

218. Are the representatives in your lower Church Courts elected by the people?—Not elected by the members of the congregations.

219. Have you read the Irish National Scripture Lesson-books yourself?—Not the whole of it.

220. What evidence do you give us that the Wesleyans are acquainted with these Scripture Lesson-books?—I know that many of them have had it in their hands, and are in favour of it being used in the schools.

221. In other words, the Wesleyan people who have signed the petition have done so upon the representation of others?—I suppose that is so in regard to all petitions.

222. They have lately, in circuit meeting, passed resolutions in favour of religious education in the public schools?—They have in several places.

223. To what extent?—I cannot tell; I have no information.

224. What have you done to ascertain whether they are in favour of the present movement?—I have taken no direct steps here, simply because I felt it was needless to procure petitions now, seeing that no action was likely to be taken by the House this session. I believe that 80 per cent. of our people would sign the petition willingly.

225. To what extent have ministers taken advantage of the Act of 1877 to give religious instruction in the State schools?—In several parts of the colony ministers have attended after school-hours to give religious instruction. One minister at Woolston, near Christchurch, continued to do so for more than two years. He told me that at the beginning he believed it could be done, but eventually he came to the conclusion that the attempt was a comparative failure; the people there were favourable, the teachers were favourable, and remained while the lesson was given; he had everything to assist him that could be desired, but the attendance gradually fell off, and there was no means of enforcing it.

226. Do you know to what extent the clergy of all denominations have taken advantage of the Act of 1877?—I am not aware to what extent; but all over the colony, to some extent, ministers have endeavoured to take advantage of it.

227. Are you aware that a return was laid on the table of the House of Representatives for 1893, showing the number of clergymen of all denominations who attended to give instruction in the schools amounted to 7 per cent.?—I can very well believe that, inasmuch as we are convinced, the majority of us, that very little can be done in that direction; and, so far as many of us are concerned, the necessary work that comes to our hand every day is such that it would be impossible for us to give the time and attention that such additional work would involve.

228. If this text-book is introduced, do you think the Roman Catholics would take up this position: that, inasmuch as the State has made its schools distinctly Protestant, they are entitled to a grant in aid of their schools?—I imagine they might take up that position.

229. They would use that as an argument in favour of their application for a grant in aid of denominational schools?—Probably they would.

230. Would other denominations follow their example?—I do not think so; however, if grants were given to Roman Catholics, I do not think you could withhold similar grants from other sections if they applied for it.

231. You have said that this book would lead to a higher state of morality?—That is my opinion.

232. Inferentially, that those who passed through the schools would be law-abiding?—Yes.

233. Are you aware that from a return laid on the table of the House in 1893, showing the number of children committed to the Industrial Schools of the colony, that 209 children were committed by the Resident Magistrates to the Industrial Schools; that of these 43 per cent. represented the Church of England, 40·51 per cent. of the total population; that 38 per cent. were Roman Catholic, or 13·96 per cent. of the total population; that 11 per cent. represented the Presbyterian Church, or 22·62 per cent. of the total population; the Wesleyan 5½ per cent., or 8·49 per cent. of the total population. Now, what I want to ask in connection with this is: how it comes that the two denominations that have their own denominational schools in which they impart reli-

gious instruction stand highest in juvenile crime?—It may be that connected with these Churches there are a great many nominal adherents who are non-church-goers. The children sent to the Industrial Schools are mostly the children of parents who do not go to any church. I think you will find that the criminal class do not come from church-going people; some may, but not anything like the number of children belonging to non-church-going people.

234. Do you think that parents who belong to the Church of England and Roman Catholic Church are less careful in bringing up their children than the parents of other denominations?—I am not aware that they are.

235. Our system of education has been characterized as “godless,” “atheistic,” “communist,” “infidel.” Is that your opinion?—Not at all. If there is one of these terms that could be used, such as “godless,”—I have never used the term myself,—the meaning of those who use it, I presume, is that God’s Word is excluded from the school. I do not think that in any other sense it could be used.

236. Are you aware what effect the Irish National Scripture Lesson-book has had where it has been introduced into a national system of education; has the national system in such places been maintained in its entirety, or has it been broken up?—So far as I am aware it has been maintained.

237. Have you any experience of the working of the Irish National Scripture Lesson-book?—I have no experience.

238. Are you aware that it was discarded by the Commissioners of National Education and sent to New South Wales?—I am not aware of that, or that the Commissioners of the National Schools sent it to New South Wales.

239. I only put the question to you to ascertain your knowledge?—I do not think they sent it to New South Wales; I think the Education Department of that colony adopted it.

240. What effect has the book had on the Irish national system of education; has that system been maintained in its entirety, or has this book been the means of destroying the national character of the system in Ireland?—I am aware that system broke down for a time; probably the state of Ireland is somewhat peculiar and cannot be compared with other countries.

241. So that, in your opinion, every place that tried to get this book introduced into their schools is no test of the usefulness of it if introduced into the schools of the colony?—Not so; but in Ireland the representatives of one special Church were under outside influence: they were compelled to withdraw the book.

242. *Mr. Collins.*] I will draw your attention to page 5 of the Royal Reader, where you will find the following references: “The Song of Miriam,” “The Destruction of Sennacherib’s Army,” “The Nativity,” “Psalm of Life,” “Law written by the finger of God on the heart of man,”—there are illustrations of Biblical passages. Do you think it is fair to apply the term “godless” to a system which embraces such teaching as that?—I have said that I never used the term “godless” myself. I think those who use the term simply use it with this meaning—namely, that God’s Word is not read in the schools; you must admit that those poems are not extracts from the Bible.

243. But they are on Bible subjects?—Yes.

244. Do you think it is fair, with these passages strewn up and down through the book, do you think it is fair to stigmatize our system as a “godless” system?—I am not myself prepared to use that phrase.

245. Then, do you think that the Irish National Scripture Lesson-book will be a solution of the difficulty?—I believe it will.

246. Would you be surprised to hear that we have evidence of the highest authority to the contrary, that gentlemen of great experience have expressed the opinion that it is to be regarded as rather the thin end of the wedge towards denominationalism?—I should be surprised, inasmuch as a leader of the Anglican Church in this diocese admitted to me that it would prevent the denominational system.

247. Do you think it is a good thing that parents of children belonging to denominational Churches should be able to meet together in regard to the education of their children on a common platform, irrespective of religious differences?—I certainly think so.

248. Do you think that anything that would tend to break up the present system of education would be a good thing?—I do not think it would.

249. Suppose a number of schools would have to take advantage of the conscience clause, would not that emphasize these differences?—It might; but I do not think it would break up the harmony which exists among the children themselves.

Rev. JAMES PATERSON, in attendance and examined.

250. *The Chairman.*] The Committee have decided that, as this is an important national question, the evidence given before the Committee should be printed for the use of the members of the House of Representatives, hence I have invited you to come this morning so that your evidence should be taken down in shorthand. We will be pleased to hear any statement you have to make. Is the Committee to understand that you represent the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand?—Yes.

251. You are voicing the views of your Church on this question of religious instruction in the State schools?—Quite so. I think I should read the resolution that was passed by the General Assembly of our Church. It is in the printed documents before you. I regret that I forgot to bring with me the minutes of proceedings of our Assembly. I have here a minute of our General Assembly held in 1894. It is as follows: “Receive the report, and thank the Committee for their diligence, and especially the convener. Express the gratification of the Assembly at the increased interest and activity shown in the community generally on the subject of religious education in our

public schools during the past year; and, in regard to the chief recommendation of the report, that the Irish "Text-book of Scripture Lessons for National Schools" should be favourably considered by the Assembly, as fitted to be a platform on which all the Churches may reasonably be expected to unite. Resolve that the Assembly cordially approves of this recommendation of the Committee, and desires the ministers and office-bearers of the Church in their various districts to endeavour to awaken increased interest in it, and to co-operate with others for this object, so that by a combined effort the text-book may be introduced into our national schools, thus securing for our children the blessing of religious education in a satisfactory form, and in harmony with sound political principles." A similar report was drawn up for this year, 1895. It was to the same effect. The Standing Committee of the Assembly during the year to watch over the interests of education gives in its report annually to the Assembly, and the Assembly passes a deliverance on that report. This is the deliverance passed on the report for 1894-95. You will remember I read to you the other day when I was here the deliverances of the Church in Otago and Southland, which are substantially to the same effect, in favour of this Scripture text-book. I am sorry I have not brought the proceedings with me, but I might say that the great body of our Church take a similar view. Of course, in every large body or assembly of men there are individuals who constitute a minority; in this case a small minority. But the great body of the Church agree to the necessity of having some religious instruction in the public schools. They would have desired the Bible as a whole to be read in the schools, as containing the best kind of religious instruction that could be given; but failing that, they have agreed, in regard to this text-book, that it affords a basis on which most of the Churches and a great part of the people can unite in placing this instruction in our schools. At the same time we are most anxious to maintain the present system of education in its entirety—not to touch it; for we believe it to be an admirable system. I have been a member of the Education Board (Wellington) since its existence, and I have seen the working of the Act. I have no sympathy with those who denounce the present system of education as a "godless" system. Although there is no direct religious instruction provided, the whole tone of it is free in spirit, and in favour of morality and religion. But I believe that most people agree that some kind of direct religious instruction is wanted, and, so far as they are agreed, ought to be provided. In every other respect they agree in thinking the present system admirable. They believe that if an element of religious instruction could be introduced the system would more effectually accomplish all that could be desired. We wish to maintain the present system, and at the same time to introduce an element of religious instruction, believing, as we do, that it is essential to impart the knowledge of religious truth in the education of our young people. Hitherto we have been weak in pressing our objection to the exclusion of religious instruction from the schools, inasmuch as the Churches themselves were somewhat divided. The Church of England could not join with this movement for a time. They wished for denominational education. The Roman Catholics also desired denominational education. We are opposed to denominational education, because we think it would break up the present system; and rather than break up the present system of education we would prefer things to remain as they are. Now that the Church of England and the Wesleyan and Presbyterian Churches, and others, amounting to about 80 per cent. of the whole population of the colony, are all united in an agreement to ask for this improvement, we think that should form a strong argument in favour of introducing this Scripture text-book into the schools. I think some member of the Committee has said that the mere reading of this Scripture lesson-book, without being questioned on the subject-matter of it—that is, without interpretation or comment—would have no effect. I would like to say this much: I believe the reading of this book, inasmuch as it consists of large portions of Scripture, and lessons upon the truths of religion, must make our young people familiar with the simple, but essential truths of religion, and the essential and permanent facts of Christianity. This book may be made to form the basis of our Sunday-school work in applying these truths to the hearts and consciences of the children. It is said that the whole of this teaching should be left to the Church. I think the Churches are doing noble work in the Sunday-schools. I am not indifferent to that work; neither is the congregation of which I am the pastor. We have two large Sunday-schools, which contain from eight hundred to nine hundred children, taught by seventy teachers. Every Sunday we have Bible-classes for young people over fifteen years of age; I think the number of these is about one hundred and fifty; all of them under religious instruction. Generally, I have a Bible-class of my own. We do our utmost as a Church to impart religious instruction to the young. I know that other Churches are doing the same thing. Yet, I believe our work is not all that we wish it to be, and there is a large number outside that we cannot gather in. Hence the necessity of religious instruction being communicated to the youth in our public schools. That would form a basis on which our Sunday-school teachers could operate in the Sunday-school.

252. Do you desire to make any further statement?—If you will ask me questions I shall be glad to give you any further information I can. I may state, with regard to the petitions that have been sent in, I believe they would have come in greater numbers, but it seemed improbable that much would be done during the present session of Parliament. I have had petitions sent to me from Auckland, and all parts of that provincial district; also from Hawke's Bay, and various parts of the Wellington Province. I handed these petitions to Mr. Button, who, I believe, has handed them to your Committee. These, however, are but a fraction of what could be got, if necessary. In regard to my own congregation I did not ask them to sign, for it would be of little use, the session being so far advanced. I think it will be far better to put forth our whole strength next year in petitions which will voice the opinion of the people, for we believe that the bulk of the people of the colony are in favour of religious instruction being given in the State schools.

253. *Mr. Willis.*] While you said you had no wish to call our schools "godless," at the same time you must know that there is no religious instruction given in them?—No direct religious instruction.

254. From Nelson's books there have been several extracts laid before the Committee. There is one called "The Nativity," another is called "The Bridegroom Cometh." Would you not call that religious instruction?—Perhaps so; but it is not direct religious instruction. The whole of English literature is saturated with Bible and spiritual truth. But you would not call reading a passage from Tennyson direct religious instruction. Yet the whole of Tennyson's works is saturated with religious truth and scripture quotations.

255. Those extracts I refer to are from the Bible; and would you not call the teaching imparted by means of them religious?—I think it is wrong to call our present system of education a "godless" system; at the same time I consider the introduction of the text-book now proposed will be an improvement. I recognise that there is a high moral tone and religious feeling in the books read and the instruction now given; but I should like to give the children a good deal more of the same character of instruction.

256. You do not think that our children are worse than the children of other countries?—I do not think so.

257. What is the pressing need for this change if our children compare favourably with the children of other places?—We want to make them better.

258. Do you think this will give satisfaction to Roman Catholics or their priests?—I cannot tell what the opinion of their priests may be. But I believe it will be satisfactory to a good many Catholic parents, because a good many of them have signed the petition. I am informed by those who should know that such is the case. All my knowledge goes to this: that Catholic parents will not object to getting religious instruction for their children. What the priests may think I do not know.

259. Do you consider that Bible-reading will be satisfactory without interpretation by the teacher?—In what way satisfactory?

260. Without interpretation?—Do you not think yourself that reading over such lessons from the Scripture text-book to intelligent children will go a long way in conveying to their minds a knowledge of the truths set forth in the Bible?

261. Do you think it will give entire satisfaction?—I do not say that it will give entire satisfaction to everybody, but it will go a long way towards what we aim at. When we are all agreed to go so far, let us go thus far if the path is good. Do you not think that the history of Christ's life and teaching and works, and of His Church, when read by an intelligent child, is likely to sink into his heart and improve his conduct? If we differ, we cannot go together; but let us go as far as we are agreed.

262. Would it not be awkward for some teachers holding particular religious opinions?—We are not going to force them to teach if they can show that they have any objection. If they are not in sympathy with the text-book, it is better that they should not be required to teach it; I believe, however, that the great bulk of the teachers will be in sympathy with it.

263. Do you think that Committees will be prejudiced against teachers who are not favourable to it?—In other words, you ask if I think that Committees will represent the people and yet be opposed to the strongest wishes and desires of the people?

264. Suppose Wesleyans, or any other denomination, having a preponderance on the Committee, would they not be in a position to influence the Committee against the teacher?—The Committee represent the people. They may be of different denominations, but if they are all agreed to accept this text-book they are simply carrying out the wishes of the people. They are elected a Committee because the great bulk of the people asked them to represent their desires and wishes upon a matter that is very dear to them. If the teacher objects, how are the Committees to carry out the desires and wishes that are very dear to them. They do not wish to prejudice the teacher, but if the teacher objects to carry out their wishes they will not appoint him, and I think justly.

265. If the teacher were a Roman Catholic, would not the Committee be prejudiced against a Roman Catholic?—If the Roman Catholic teacher is a good man, who would read the book in the right spirit, there would be no prejudice against him. The book contains simply what is sacred to the Roman Catholic as well as to the Protestant. The extracts are taken from his own sacred books. If he is a good man, and reads the text-book in a reverential spirit, I do not see that there can be any objection to him.

266. *Mr. Collins.*] I noticed that the concluding words of the resolution passed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church are to the effect that religious education is working out in harmony with "sound political principles." I would ask you whether it is in harmony with sound political principles that the State has a right, or that it is the duty of the State, to interfere in any way with religious views that would be of a divergent character?—Yes, I do; because I think that the State is simply the representative of the people; and if the people wish religion taught in the schools the State should allow it.

267. Men in authority on political matters have held that view a very long time since?—That may be. If they do not hold that the State is bound to carry out the wishes of the people they do not hold "sound" political principles.

268. But the question is, what is "sound political principles"?—If we are to discuss here what is sound political principles it will not help us much on the subject before the Committee.

269. I do not know whether it is absolutely fixed, or open to dispute?—Is there any principle or theory that is not open to dispute? I say it is sound principle that when the great body of the people want a thing which they believe to be essential to their good, the Legislature ought to recognise and grant it.

270. I am sorry that you do not answer my question?—I have answered it.

271. You said it was your object to make them better?—Yes.

272. Do you think that, comparing the results of our system with the results of systems that

are in vogue in other places where religion is a part and parcel of them, our system compares favourably or unfavourably with them?—I do not know as to that. I am most familiar with the state of things that obtains in Scotland, where they have a great opinion of the influence of religious training. I believe it is the religious training that most Scotchmen get which has brought them to the front in every part of the world. I believe that it was religious training which developed their nature, and gave them that robustness of moral and intellectual character which they are found to possess wherever you put them.

273. Do you think that when the training was more religious than it is now men were more moral than they are now?—I know that religion is taught now in Scotland as it was in my boyhood. I do not remember a time when it was otherwise.

274. Do you believe that the children of other places are more moral than those of New Zealand?—How can I tell? But if you ask me whether religious training tends to improvement I say that it does. Where you get religion planted in the heart of a young or an old person it has a good influence on the character and life.

275. I would like to know whether your information shows results to the advantage of our children as compared with those under systems where religious instruction is given. Would you be prepared to put in statistical information on that point?—You have asked me whether I would be surprised to hear that where no religion is taught the moral sense is better than where it is taught. I would be surprised to hear that.

276. I can only say it is so. There is only one more question that I will ask you as to this claim to religious instruction in our State schools. Do you know whether it originated with the people or the clergy?—I believe it is a deeply-felt want with the people; that the clergy, so far as they express themselves, are simply voicing what is the deep-felt want of our people, and therefore a want to be satisfied.

277. Do you think that if this text-book is admitted to the schools it will be regarded as a final solution of the difficulty—you say the various religious bodies are united?—The bulk of them, Yes.

278. Will they regard it as final, or only temporary?—I believe most of the Christian churches are thoroughly sincere in this matter; they have come to the conclusion that they are not at all likely to get what they would all desire. They believe that denominational education is hopeless in this colony. They have come to the conclusion to join with us in asking for the introduction of some religious instruction into the schools upon which all would be agreed. I believe there is no ulterior object contemplated. The Bishop of Wellington referred to this matter in his address to the Anglican Synod a short time ago.

279. Do you accept the statement of other dignitaries?—I do not know anything of the statements of other dignitaries. I know there are some who would like a good deal more; but if they would have more they are now cutting the ground from under their feet in joining in this movement.

280. *Mr. McNab.*] You say you are a member of the Wellington Education Board?—Yes.

281. The Board has the largest say in the appointment of the teacher?—Yes; they carry out the true meaning of the Act in regard to the appointment of teachers subject to the approval of the committees.

282. Would the fact of the applicant being a Roman Catholic affect their selection of a teacher where the school is situated in a strong Presbyterian district?—We have no district here in the North Island that we could call a strong Presbyterian district. There are such in the South Island. The appointment never turns upon the question of the Church to which the teacher belongs.

283. If this book had to be read in schools under the direction of a teacher, would you consider the question whether he was a Roman Catholic or not in the event of his being sent to a strongly Presbyterian community?—I do not know; if he were a thoroughly good man, willing to read it, I should offer no objection; at the same time, as a practical thing, it is better if you had a community that was wholly Protestant to appoint a teacher in sympathy with them, and *vice versa*. It is very likely the Roman Catholic teacher might not himself feel at home there.

284. Would you take that view in considering your selection?—I do not know whether we would or not; I do not know that it has ever come before our mind.

285. Would there not be some danger of injustice in that method of selection?—If he were a man in other respects qualified for the position, we would probably appoint him; I think he would probably be appointed, and the Board might make other arrangements for teaching the Scripture text-book if he objected.

286. The Board communicating with him to make the necessary arrangements?—He would not make the arrangements; if he satisfied the Board that he was a conscientious man, and objected, the Board would make arrangements.

287. Would the Board be likely to ask him his religious views?—I do not think so. I do not think the Board would apply any such test.

288. You quoted the fact that a number of Roman Catholics signed the petition?—I cannot say so of my own knowledge. I made that statement on the testimony of others; I could not prove it, but I believe it is so.

289. Do you know there is a large number of people who hold that, if this Bill should pass, it will be the stepping-stone to denominational education?—It is very likely they do, but I think they are wrong.

290. Then, it would be the interest of all who held that view to sign the petition?—I am not quite sure that would be so; for, if we get what we want they could not say on the one side that the system was "godless," nor, on the other, they could not demand the aid of the State for denominational schools on the ground that there was no religion taught in the State schools. By doing so they would be only cutting the ground from under their feet.

291. Have you not shifted from the opinion of others to your own opinion? What I asked was, Whether you do not think that, for those who would make this a stepping-stone to something further, it would not be their interest to sign the petition?—If they thought this the stepping-stone to their ultimate object undoubtedly it would.

292. Might not that explain why the Roman Catholics have signed this petition?—It might as a matter of argument, but as a matter of fact I do not think it would.

293. If it were known that suggestions were made to Roman Catholics to sign with this view, would you not be disposed to think that this accounted for a number of the Roman Catholic signatories?—I think if that were so, that this was to be regarded as a stepping-stone to an ulterior purpose, the priests would compel them all to sign: where that is not the case, that it would be a stepping-stone to something more, they would be opposed to their people signing it.

294. Have you known of any cases where the Roman Catholics refused to sign?—No.

295. *Mr. Lang.*] Suppose this were established and another movement proposed for explaining the book, would you support those who would ask for further extension of what is now asked?—It would depend. I would not urge anything that would break up the unity and harmony of those who are now agreed.

296. You are in favour of religious instruction in schools?—Yes.

297. Would you consider reading this without comment religious instruction?—It would be very helpful; good so far.

297A. Suppose this were established, and it were thought desirable,—as many do think it desirable,—that these lessons should be explained, would not anyone now in favour of religious instruction in these schools be bound to support that movement?—The whole thing is a practical question. Would such a proposal meet with general approval?

298. What effect would that have upon the system? Would it stir up opposition in others, and take us much further than we would wish to go?—The question would then be whether it were not better to continue what we have already got.

299. Do you think that, if the State undertakes to provide for the school, it is too much to ask the Churches and the parents to do the rest that may be wanted?—I think it is only right for the Churches and parents to do all that they possibly can; yet, when they have done all they possibly can, I think there is room for more being done in the public schools. I think that religion is an essential part of the education of young people. I think that as regards national education, where there is no religious instruction—I mean no direct religious instruction, no recognition of the fundamental truths of religion, or of the Bible—there is no sound national education. That may be contrary to the Act. The Act says that the education of the State schools is to be exclusively secular. I say, that exclusively secular education is not the true education of the people of the colony. I maintain that we ought to have some element of religious instruction in the schools.

300. Do you think the instruction is better that is given at home?—In many cases it is. But let us consider the position of the ordinary head of a family; the father usually leaves home early in the morning, and does not return to his home until late in the evening. He hardly sees his children, except when they are going to bed. What time has he to give to their education, to give them religious instruction, or any other instruction? Besides, a great many parents are careless, and do not trouble themselves about it. The Church finds, even when it has done its best, that what they have done falls short of what is most desirable.

301. Suppose there were two teachers applying for a situation under the Education Board—a Roman Catholic and a Protestant: With this system of reading in the schools, other things being equal, would the preference be given to the teacher who would read this book?—Possibly. Why should it not be if parents desired it, other things being equal? Do you think if the parents wished it it would not be right to do it, and to appoint a teacher who was in sympathy with their views or wishes?

302. *The Chairman.*] You have referred to an address delivered by the Bishop of Wellington to the Diocesan Synod on the 2nd October of the present year?—Yes.

303. Has your attention been called to this paragraph in that address? “We are giving up nothing that we have or hope to have.” What interpretation do you put on that? Do you think that in that passage he is voicing the opinion of the Church of England?—“Or hope to have.” I believe that he has come to the conviction that special church teaching in State-supported schools is a hopeless thing.

304. That is not exactly an answer to my question. Here is what is published by authority: [Paragraph read again.] He has no hope. Is it that he is not giving up the hope, or that the Church of England, which he represents, has not given up the hope, of returning to the denominational system?—I am afraid, Mr. Chairman, you must ask the Bishop to explain his own address; he best can.

305. What would be the attitude, in your opinion, of those who characterise the present system as “godless,” supposing this Irish text-book to be introduced into the schools? Would they not characterise the system as distinctly Protestant?—I think not “distinctly” Protestant; but they could not say it was “godless”; they could only say it was, in a broad sense, religious.

306. You know the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church both to Bible-teaching and to the teaching in this book: you are aware they are opposed to it?—On this ground: not that there is anything in it opposed to their doctrines or principles, but that it does not go far enough for them—does not teach their church catechism. I do not think they can lay a finger on anything that is opposed to them, but that the book does not go far enough.

307. Do you not think they would have good reason for agitating for a grant in aid of their schools, upon the ground that our system had become distinctly Protestant?—I do not think that, on account of the introduction of this book, they would say it had become “distinctly Protestant.”

308. Do you know what has been the effect of the introduction of this book into the national schools of Ireland?—I cannot say.

309. What effect it has had on the national character of that system?—I am not in a position to answer that question.

310. I ask you whether it has destroyed the national character of that system—broken it up into dribblets of denominationalism?—I am not in a position to answer that. I have no knowledge of it.

311. Is it your candid opinion that it is the duty of the State to teach religion?—I would like that explained.

312. You are a minister of a most distinguished Church, which severed its connection with the State?—Yes; but not on these grounds.

313. Was it not on account of the interference of the State?—It was not a question of the interference of the State with the teaching in public schools. It was upon the ground of the State entering upon the province of the Church. It was on the ground of the interference of the State with the independence of the Church in spiritual matters.

314. Do you think it would be a proper thing to call upon the taxpayers to support a system of religious teaching?—I think the great body of the taxpayers wish that some element of religion should be attached to the education given to the children of the colony in our public schools. If the people of the colony as a whole say it ought to be, it is quite right that the State should adopt it. Most of the people are agreed that there should be some religious teaching in the schools. We cannot get absolute unanimity on any system; but I cannot see any objection to going as far as there is substantial agreement among the people of the colony.

315. As a member of the Wellington Education Board, do you know to what extent clergymen have taken advantage of the provision in the Act of 1877 to give religious instruction to the children before or after school-hours?—I believe it has been tried, but it proved to be a failure; they could not get the children to attend.

316. Do you know to what extent it was tried?—It was tried in Otago, and also in Canterbury; in one or two cases in Canterbury it has succeeded. In the district where the Hon. Mr. Bowen's brother is the clergyman, it has succeeded well; but that is only an isolated case. The difficulty is to get the children to attend outside the school-hours, when there is no teacher to keep them in order.

317. Would you be surprised if I told you, from my own knowledge, that it has succeeded in many schools under the North Canterbury Board?—I am glad to know that it is so.

318. Are you aware that, from a return laid upon the table of the House, only 7 per cent. of the whole of the schools of the colony were visited with the view of imparting religious instructions by the clergy of the various denominations?—It is very likely; I believe it would be utterly a failure; you cannot get the children to attend, and the clergy have not the time.

319. If they took only 7 per cent. of the schools of the colony you could scarcely say that the thing has been properly tried?—Where it has been tried, as I am informed, it has been a failure.

320. As a matter of personal experience I know that it is the opposite?—I am very glad to hear it.

321. *Mr. Lang.*] Here is the paragraph in the Bishop's address following that which was read by the Chairman. [Paragraph read.] Do you think that by getting this book into the public schools it would weaken the plea of those who want denominational education on the ground that there is no religious instruction given in the State schools?—Yes; the Bishop is quite right in that statement.

322. *The Chairman.*] There is another paragraph before that to which I would like to call your attention. [Paragraph read.] Can you tell us what is meant by "accepted by all"?—I do not know what it means.

Major-General SCHAW, C.B., in attendance and examined.

323. *The Chairman.*] The Committee, after hearing the evidence given by yourself and the other gentlemen, considered that, as this is an important National question, it was desirable that the evidence should be printed for the information of the members of the House, and no doubt also for the information of the general public. With that view, it was decided that the evidence should be taken down in shorthand, and that the gentlemen who had previously given their evidence should be asked to repeat it. I understand that you appear here as Secretary to the Wellington Scripture Text-book Committee, and that you represent that Committee?—Yes.

324. Do you represent any other organization?—In this way I represent other organizations: The associations at the other large centres of population have appointed a sort of executive Committee here to make arrangements with the members of the House who have introduced the Bill now before the House, so that the Bill may meet the views of all those associations; as the secretary of that Committee I represent the whole of these associations, but only in that way.

325. This Committee will be pleased to hear your statement?—I presume the printed evidence given on the previous day will still stand part of my evidence. [See Appendices I. and VII.]

326. If you wish it; will you put it in?—Yes; I will put it in. Also a statement giving statistics in connection with the various associations; also the Synodical address of the Bishop of Wellington, or so much of it as regards this particular object.

327. That portion which refers to this subject will be inserted in the minutes? The Bishop has been communicated with. Every opportunity has been given to the Bishop to appear before this Committee, but so far he has not indicated his intention to appear before the Committee, either personally or by representative?—I think I mentioned he was absent from town. He has now returned.

328. He has been communicated with a second time?—Then, Sir, I will proceed with what I have to say. From the statistics of the associations which I have handed to you it will be observed that representatives of nearly all the Protestant religious bodies are on these Committees. The Church

of England is fully represented on them all, with the exception of Dunedin, where, I understand, the Bishop of that diocese still wishes for what all the rest have given up as impossible—that is, denominational teaching. The Presbyterians and the Wesleyans are in all the associations. These three denominations represent about 70 per cent. of the population of New Zealand. Other Protestant bodies, with a considerable number of Roman Catholics who wish for something of this kind in our public schools, make up 80 per cent. of the population, allowing for individuals in all these denominations who demur, as there are always some who disagree. Then, with regard to the facts which have been elicited, and which appear in the appendix to the statement laid on the table, it will be seen that, both as regards the religious denominations and the percentage of population, our estimate has been fully borne out. Nearly all religious denominations are represented in the statistics of Palmerston North; nearly two-thirds of the Roman Catholics there wish for the change, so that those who wish for this change at Palmerston North represent 88 per cent. of the population there. This canvass was carefully taken by a paid canvasser—a person of responsibility. Nelson City was carefully canvassed by volunteers; and, although many were not reached, yet there is a considerable majority who wish for this change: those who made the canvass state that there were not more than from 10 to 15 per cent. who objected; so that again bears out the view that we represent a very large majority of the people of New Zealand. In similar cases that were tried in Wellington, as in Aurora Terrace, where I live, there were sixty-five for and eight against; and in Wadestown there were ninety-nine for and eleven against. At Wadestown there were about twenty who were not asked because they were Roman Catholics; some of these said afterwards they were sorry they were not asked. If they had been asked they would have gladly signed. The total number of signatures that have come in is, I think, about eighteen thousand. I wish to impress on the Committee that this does not represent the total number of people who wish for the change. It is merely an indication of the widely spread feeling; and probably the proportion of the population over the whole colony would be nearly the same as in Palmerston North. I should state that in all other cases the canvass was taken very hurriedly and imperfectly; only a small number of persons could be reached. Wellington has not been canvassed. We have only the signatures of the members of three or four congregations. Many people have thought that a “monster” petition next session would be more effective than petitions sent in at the advanced stage of the present session of Parliament. The conclusion we arrive at is that three-fourths of the people desire the change that is now proposed; probably eight-tenths. Then, I should like to say why they wish for this change. They believe that the Word of God is the only sure foundation for the formation of good moral character, and that to exclude it from the schools is cruel and unjust, alike to the parents and the children, and a danger to the State. We ask that this particular book may be introduced, because experience shows that it is suited to our purpose, containing as it does the foundations of our scriptural belief. It has been accepted by all these various bodies of christian people, because it does not obtrude any contested or debatable matter. The Douay version has been largely used to make it more acceptable to the Roman Catholics. I have heard some objections raised to the proposed change, and would be glad if the Committee would allow me to make the following answers to them:—

1. *Parents should teach Religion to their Children.*—This is undoubtedly best; but many parents do not; many cannot teach their children. The disability is increased by increased knowledge acquired at school by the children, who soon think they know more than their parents, and so become disobedient, having no religious teaching to counteract this tendency.

2. *Are not Sunday Schools sufficient?*—No; because in many country districts there are none. In town districts many children do not attend them. Thus many young people grow up without any knowledge of God or his Word. Besides, Sunday-school lasts one hour once a week. The attendance is voluntary, and the teachers are untrained. All this compares badly with the daily, compulsory, secular schooling, with trained teachers and all appliances; and the children naturally conclude that secular learning is all-important, and religion unimportant; whereas we hold that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

3. *The Bible read without Explanation is useless.*—We do not admit this. Doubtless, a fully qualified and earnest teacher would help the children much by explanation. But the Scriptures chosen for the lessons are within the powers of the understanding of children; the questions to be asked, and the few explanatory notes given, insure that the children do understand what is read. The system removes the danger of denominational or erroneous teaching; and teachers having no special theological training can still usefully teach the Scripture lessons. We are well assured that even this simple reading of the Word of God will have a very beneficial effect, and the lessons will remain in the memory and influence the lives of the young people as they grow up.

4. *It will lead to bad feeling amongst the Children; those who do not attend Scripture Lessons jeering at the others, and vice versa.*—This has not been found to be the case in practice. It is not a new thing to have Scripture lessons in schools, with a conscience clause, but has stood the test of experience in England, in the United States of America, in New South Wales, and elsewhere. Should such conduct ever occur, teachers must repress it.

5. *Why should not the Clergy teach Religion before or after School-hours; as now permitted by law?*—Because in very few places have the clergy sufficient leisure to enable them to do this without neglecting their other work; also, if not carefully arranged, it must evidently lead to denominational teaching; also very few children can be gathered together out of school-hours, and they are wanted at home, or they are already tired with lessons, or they prefer play; and in any case discipline is very imperfect. It has been tried most fully in Nelson, and found most unsatisfactory. It is to be noted that, excepting Palmerston North, from Nelson come the most numerous petitions in proportion to population for the change asked for.

6. *Are the Teachers fit?*—If their own consciences do not declare them unfit, and if their

characters outwardly be such as to entitle them to respect, we assume them to be fit. Any irreverence in word or manner would soon come to light, and be dealt with by School Committees. We know that many are eminently fit and desirous of the privilege. Some, probably, are not; they would be relieved of the duty under the conscience clause.

7. *The State should have nothing to do with Religion.*—Were the Government of the State different in nationality, status, and religion from the people of the State, as in British India, there might be truth in this. But here the people and the State are one. In this country all questions are decided by majorities, with due regard to justice towards minorities. We contend that the majority of the people here desire to have their children taught the Holy Scriptures in the schools, and that this should be done accordingly, with full freedom for those who think differently to be absent from the lessons.

We hold that to educate the young without any religious foundation is a serious danger to the State. Here a young person may grow up without knowing why it is wrong to steal, &c., or do any wrong to the community; or, if asked in a Court of Justice if he knew the meaning of an oath, would reply that he had not been taught it. There is nothing, so far as I know, in the present system of education to teach young persons that it is wrong to perjure themselves, or to know the meaning of an oath.* The whole system of law depends upon the Bible. I do not see how we can rationally withhold it from the children. I would like to mention two examples which occur to me of the consequences of laxity or indifference in this particular. I have referred to India: we have a striking example there of the effect of a purely secular education. The British Government had a very peculiar question to solve in British India. They wished to elevate the people, and they did not wish to interfere with their religious beliefs. So they started schools and colleges for the purpose of giving a purely secular education, the same as we give. The result is that the educated Hindoos form the most dangerous class in India at the present time. They have the native Press—a scurrilous Press—very much in their hands, and are leaders in all sorts of sedition; for they have lost the restraints of their old religion, and nothing else has been put in its place. They have no moral guide or restraint against anything that is wrong. That was a very difficult case. We had clearly no right to impose our religion on the people. I believe, however, that missionary schools and colleges in India show a very different result. The other example is the case of France. You know that some time ago education in France was mainly in the hands of the Roman Catholic clergy. I do not know the exact date, but sometime after the war of 1870–71, the whole system was altered, so that education became secular as it is here. The report of the Head of Police in France published last year, stated that since the change criminals have been springing up like weeds in the crevices of the pavement. Such has been the result in France of a purely secular education. Here, I believe, crime has diminished of late years; but there are many reasons to account for it. Much has been done by the clergy and Sunday-schools, and by the Salvation Army. All and each have produced marked effects, and I believe that crime would have further diminished if we had what we ask for—the teaching of the Bible in our schools. We are a slower people than the people of France. They are more excitable than we are, and changes take place more rapidly there than among ourselves. I might refer, further, to how we came to be in New Zealand: There is no doubt that it was the Bible that opened up New Zealand to colonisation; so it is the Bible that is opening up Uganda. It was the Bible that opened up Polynesia. We consider ourselves as a people more civilised than Russia; and yet the Russian Government gives free passes over the whole of her railways and water communications to the agents of the Bible Society, so that the Bible may be spread throughout Russia in every direction. They know in that country that people who read the Bible become good subjects. They want the Bible disseminated as widely as possible, notwithstanding the fact that their method of government there leads to a great deal of religious persecution.

329. *Mr. Willis.*] What effect do you suppose the reading of the Bible in schools would have if read without comment and specially supervised by the teacher?—I presume you have heard my previous statements on this head. I believe that the word of God is so powerful for good that, although taught imperfectly, it will still have its effect. This Scripture text-book is, of course, not the best medium of religious instruction; but it explains to any one in sympathy with Bible truth, however imperfectly, the foundations of the Christian religion. Even if it be an imperfect form of giving religious instruction it is better than none.

330. Do you consider that in our State schools our children are not moral?—I have no means of making a comparison. To answer that question I would require to go into statistics, which I have not the means of doing; and I have not made personal examination into the question.

331. Is there any reason for this demand of the Churches, when this instruction has been regarded as unnecessary for so many years?—I think the feeling of this want has been in existence from the first; it has been a growing thing. I think the formation of these associations has raised the hopes of people that something can be done now; therefore, it has now come more prominently forward. It must be seven or eight years ago that this question was raised in the north of Auckland, where I was living at the time. The people were canvassed in a large district at that time, and 80 per cent. of the population wished this change to be made. We are a law-abiding people, and full of patience. When a thing is settled by law people simply say, We cannot help it, we must bear it. This question of religious instruction has not hitherto been brought before them strongly; but it has been constantly said with regard to our present free compulsory secular school system, you must not touch it lest you destroy it, and the people value free education very highly. Now they have learned, however, that there is no fear of losing our system of free education by the introduction of Scripture lessons, and therefore they ask for them.

* Since I made this statement I have accidentally discovered that the subject is well explained in a moral lesson at pp. 11, 12, 13, Royal Reader No. III., Sequel.—H.S.

FRIDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 1895.

Examination of Major-General SCHAW continued.

1. *Mr. Willis.*] Do you think that the proposed system by means of the Irish National Scripture Lesson-book will give entire satisfaction to the different denominations?—No; I do not suppose it will. There will always be some people who will be dissatisfied whatever you do; but it will give entire satisfaction to the great majority of members of the Church of England, and of the Presbyterian, Wesleyan, and other Protestant bodies; and to a considerable number of Roman Catholics also.

2. Have you any special reason for saying that?—Yes; because many of the Roman Catholics have signed the petition. I should like to answer your question put to me at our last meeting a little more precisely. The question was as to the reason for making this demand now. I might say that a fresh start has been given to the movement by the knowledge that so large a majority of the people are in favour of it, and that the principal Churches are agreed on a common platform: this has put fresh life into the movement.

3. Not because you think they are going backwards on moral grounds?—I believe it has always been demanded, for it has been before Parliament during many years previously. But these were isolated efforts. The position of the question now is very different; there is union now; there was disunion before.

4. *Mr. Collins.*] Your remarks suggest your reasons why the educational system should be altered; you draw illustrations from the effect of a purely secular education as described by the Head of Police in Paris: Have you any knowledge of the state of education in France, and the relative amount of crime since that system has been enforced, as compared with the years previous to its being in force?—I have no statistics; I have merely the statement of the Head of the Police that crime had greatly increased.

5. If you had the statistics showing that crime had decreased, would you be surprised?—Yes, I should. I go by the statement of the Head of the Police; and no one can be in a better position to judge than he is.

6. I can only say that it has decreased?—And I speak from the report of the Head of the Police, who certainly ought to know the facts.

7. I may state that, so far as the graver crimes are concerned, the decrease is remarkable. There may have been a particular class of offences in which there is an apparent increase, but the reason for the apparent increase in this class of offences is to be attributed to the more perfect methods of discovering and dealing with offences of that particular kind. Are you acquainted with the whole of the school reading-books at present in use?—I cannot say that I have studied them carefully. I have read, I think, nearly all of them.

8. Considering the nature of these reading-books, do you think that the charge that they are “godless” is just?—I think if there is religious instruction in the books it is contrary to the Act, which says that the education given in our public schools must be purely secular.

9. But, considering that they are books for the use of the schools under the present system, do you think the charge is a fair charge—namely, that the system is a “godless” one?—My answer must be guarded. To say they are “godless,” is to say that they are opposed to religion. I do not think there is anything in them that is opposed to religion. But there is nothing in them to teach Christianity that I have seen; if there were, it would be contrary to the Act.

10. Here is one of these books. We have such subjects treated as “The Nativity,” “The Song of the Angels,” “Thy will be done,” “The Bridegroom cometh,” and others. Would you consider that these were distinctly religious and Christian?—I have not looked at them carefully. I do not think I have seen those particular books you refer to; but I must repeat that if Christianity be distinctly taught in any of the school-books it is contrary to the Education Act, which states that the teaching is to be purely secular.

11. *Mr. E. M. Smith.*] Have you had this question tested at a public meeting, outside the movement that is being made by the Churches in getting people to sign petitions?—I think the strongest test that could be taken was that at Palmerston North, where there was a fair canvass by outside people, and where it is proved that 88 per cent. of the people asked for it.

12. Would you think the outside canvass a fair test. Do you not think if it were on a public platform where the people would vote, it would be a fairer test?—I think not; people might be carried away by eloquence or oratorical display. I think that public opinion taken quietly would be a better test. We have no objection to it; we have not tried it.

13. Do you not think the fact of the clergy preaching in the churches on the Sunday evenings gives them an advantage. I was in church some time ago when the Bishop drew the attention of the congregation to the petition; do you not think that would have a great influence over public opinion?—I think it would.

14. Do you not think it would be a serious blow to New Zealand if we were to undo our education system by passing an Act of Parliament without referring the matter to the people?—We do not wish to undo it; we rather want to complete it.

15. You want to go back to denominationalism?—No; that is the thing we want to guard against.

16. Have you compared your Scripture lessons with the Nelson series of reading-books?—No, I have not. We go on the broad question that the instruction given in our schools is now ordered to be purely secular. We wish that it should not be purely secular, but that it should be distinctly founded on the Holy Scriptures and the Christian religion. I believe that we, as a large majority of the people of this country, are agreed that these Scripture lessons would secure that object.

17. Would not that be dictating by the Church, to compel people to adhere to dogmatic teaching?—I think that the present state of affairs tends more in that direction. I understand that there is permission to be had now for ministers to gather the children and give them lessons before and

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

arrière pensée at all; we see but one way, and that is this way, of giving religious instruction in the schools; we know that the people are asking for it.

38. In your opinion there are none who desire it as a means to an end?—None, so far as I know.

39. Have you formed an opinion?—My opinion is that we are all doing this as a means for good; certainly not as a means to denominationalism. That is an end against which we declare. I know this is said to be the “thin end of the wedge.” It is so, of course, but it is also the whole of the wedge to bring about what we all desire; but we say it is the strongest thing that could be done against denominational education.

40. *The Chairman.*] You said you had read the Irish National Scripture Lesson-books?—I have.

41. You have spoken to the large number of signatures attached to the petition; are you aware to what extent those who have signed have read the book?—I think, probably, only a small proportion have read it; but those who have not have confidence in those who say they have read the book and are satisfied with it: the probability is that most of the petitioners who have long desired that some form of Scripture lessons should be taught in the schools are satisfied with this form, as recommended by the three principal religious bodies in the country.

42. You have referred to Ireland, where this book originated; has it been retained as the means of religious instruction there?—It was used for a certain number of years in the Irish National schools; then the system of those schools were altered. So many changes have occurred in poor Ireland that I am not able to follow them.

43. Are you aware of the circumstances which led the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland to the exclusion of this book from the schools there?—No; I am not.

44. *Mr. G. J. Smith.*] With reference to the question asked by Mr. E. M. Smith, as to introducing the book without reference to the people, I want to ask you whether it is not the fact that the associations only desire this after a poll of the people shall have been taken?—That is the special provision of the Bill to which we all have agreed.

45. It is not the desire of the associations to introduce this of their own motion?—We believe that we speak the voice of the majority of the colonists; we wish that to be made plain, by having the matter referred to the voice of the people.

46. *The Chairman.*] Is the Committee to take it that the Bill now before the House is an accurate and correct reflex of the mind of the organizations you represent on this question?—I think I may say confidently that it is.

47. *Mr. Collins.*] You said that very few people had taken advantage of the conscience clause, though a good deal had been made of it; do you not think that the reason for that is that people hesitated to make any invidious distinction between their own children and others? Is that a reason why fewer people have taken advantage of the conscience clause?—I am not prepared to say; my own knowledge is that people do not, as a rule, take advantage of it; the cases in which they do take advantage of it are rare.

Rev. J. REED GLASSON in attendance and examined.

48. *The Chairman.*] I understand you appear before the Committee to make a statement as a minister of the Congregational Church, in regard to the proposed introduction of the Irish National Scripture Lesson-books into the State schools. In making your statement, do you represent simply your own views, or the whole of the Congregational Churches of New Zealand?—I represent the Congregational Union. Would you allow me to read the resolution that was passed last year by our Union at its Conference held in Dunedin: “That it is neither the duty nor the right of the State to teach or control religion; and that, in view of open designs and covert attempts to establish denominational education, it is not desirable to alter the present educational system.” I may state, Mr. Chairman, that our Committee meets in Auckland, and that I have a telegram from the Committee asking me to appear before this Committee, if I should have the opportunity, to read that resolution and to support it. This is the position we have always taken as a denomination: It is not the duty or the right of the State to teach or control religion. Our principal reason for assuming this position is that the Lord gave to His Church the work of evangelising the world, and teaching man the truths and principles of His religion. The spiritual life which is in the nation or community should be left free to express and organize itself as the Spirit of God moves it: and we may fairly leave the destinies of mankind to Him who in many ways is working for the purification of society and the extension of His kingdom. This, we believe, is Christ’s method: work from the centre; purify the springs in individuals, &c. The method is long and difficult—all true reformatations are long and difficult in such a world as this; but there is absolutely no other way to the end. The Churches could do all this work if united. In my judgment, they had better try to get a little nearer to their common Master, and get to understand Him; then they will get nearer to one another, and then they might conserve and utilise all their forces in doing their Master’s work, instead of wasting a great deal of them in sectarian rivalries. We maintain that we have no right to use the powers of the State to extend our own, or any other, religious opinion. This principle has been accepted in these colonies and in America. The whole tendency of modern movement is in the direction of separating the functions of the State and the Church. This is the position we take up as a denomination; we have fought for this throughout our denominational history. Religious freedom depends on this, which has been accepted in these colonies. Now, if we are going to alter and go back again on these questions, you ought to have good reasons for doing so. So far as I am concerned, I have not heard any sufficient reasons. I have said to persons who are in favour of the introduction of this book into the schools, I am waiting for arguments; and I have not had them. The practical aspect of the question is this: it will be exceedingly dangerous to interfere with the present system. We

believe that the introduction of the Irish National Scripture Lesson-books will lead up to State interference with religion. Otherwise, what is the meaning of it; what is to come out of it? As soon as it is introduced you come to the question of interpretation. How are you going to interpret it? You cannot fix it, for the personal equation is sure to come in. The man who interprets the book will interpret it in his own way. This is one of the strongest objections against the introduction of such a book into the public schools. Some interpretation will be certain, and whoever interprets will have a large number of persons to sympathize with him. I believe that if the Bible or Bible lessons are to be read in the schools it ought to be interpreted in harmony with the most advanced and the best Biblical criticism of the present day. In other words, I regard the introduction of this book as detrimental to the religious life of the children without interpreting it in harmony with sound principles of Biblical criticism. As soon as you touch that question you get into religious differences. Those who feel much interest in the teacher will say that no man ought to be subject to religious tests: your School Committees will establish such tests. There will be at first some mild form of religious test, while others will declare that they do not desire to see old religious tests revived again: they will say, "We fought them throughout English history; had we not done so they would have broken the power of the people and crippled our liberties." Then, we think that the Roman Catholics have a right to be considered. These people have no just complaint at the present time, because we are supposed to provide instruction for everybody that chooses to come to the public schools. The basis of our public-school system is that we do not interfere with their religious prejudices or opinions. If this book is introduced, the Roman Catholics will have a very fair claim on the State for a grant in aid of their own denominational schools. I think so for this reason: the Roman Catholics of this colony have never been in favour of introducing this book. It is a somewhat significant thing that they say nothing about it at the present time, either for or against. They are waiting for other people to say what they have to say about it. They have no just complaint now, but if this is granted they will argue that it is a Protestant measure, and claim grants in aid of their own schools; and I cannot see how we could justly refuse them. Those who are not Christians—they have a right to be considered. This movement is in reality one step in the direction of the establishment of a State church. Many of the arguments that are used in support of this could be used with equal force and propriety in support of a State church. Now, it is true that the tendency of modern nations is away from the old individualistic standpoint. The absolute Socialist would extend the jurisdiction of the State to every sphere of life, and leave no room for the individual to turn himself about in. Now, while modern society is coming to see that in the spheres of industry, &c., there must be greater organization, and in the last resort even a certain amount of force, in the spheres of opinion, thought, religion, &c., there must be absolute freedom. Men must be allowed perfect freedom in the spheres of religion, politics, art, science, &c. Now, the introduction of religious teaching into the schools means sectarian teaching, and that means the death of freedom. I think it is very significant that there is not one denomination or body of Christians who are unanimously in favour of the introduction of this religious teaching in our public schools; that ought to be borne in mind. Gentlemen have been asked to come before this Committee. They came, representing their several denominations. The Presbyterians are divided on this subject. Only a short time ago they carried a resolution against it. I am not sure whether it was passed by a large or a small majority. A slight majority might be in favour of it now; but it is clear they are divided upon it, I think about equally. The Episcopalians are not united upon it. The large Methodist bodies are not unanimous upon it; they are divided. Our own body is to a certain extent divided, I am sorry to say. A good deal has been made of the fact that one or two of our ministers have departed from the true faith on this question. But they are beginning to see the mistake they have made, and they are anxious to get back to the true fold. This has been confessed to me. I can only say that when a man begins to try to use other men's money to extend his own opinions there is a distinct falling-off somewhere. Among our own people there have been but a few who have departed from the true faith in this respect. But there are only a few. Most of us feel that the only safe course for us to follow at the present time is to leave things as they are, and not to support what is now proposed. We feel strongly that the introduction of this text-book into the schools will eventually lead to the breaking-up of our national system. We are exceedingly anxious to train up the young people of these new lands, such as New Zealand is, to be "nationalist," and not to break them up into religious sects. We wish to keep our public schools as free as possible, and open to all.

49. *Mr. Willis.*] Do you consider that religious interference will be a danger to the national system of education which is represented by the State in this colony?—Yes.

50. Do you consider it dangerous for majorities to use their power, in favour of religious opinions, in such a matter as this?—Yes, decidedly; it would be not only dangerous but wrong for a majority to use its power to force Roman Catholic opinions on others, or to compel other people to contribute to and support theirs.

51. Do you consider that Bible-reading is of any use without interpretation, and that it would lead to bitterness and suspicion?—I would not put it that way, because I do believe that reading the Bible without any instruction from others may be very useful and helpful; but I think that the Bible cannot be read as a text-book in our schools without interpretation; and when interpretation is given it would be coloured necessarily by the person who gives it.

52. Does it lead to bitterness; I am using your own words?—The word "bitterness," as used by me, had reference to the whole thing; I did not use the word "bitterness" in reference to the school itself, but that bitterness would be imported into the whole question as regards the election of committees, the appointment of teachers, &c.

53. Do you think that in the election of committees there would be contention for the supremacy of some particular denomination?—I think it is very likely; that is my opinion.

54. Do you think that the introduction of this book will strengthen the Roman Catholics in their demand for denominational assistance?—Decidedly.

55. If denominationalism were strong in particular districts, do you think that would render it likely, or not likely, that certain teachers would not be employed?—I think it is likely it would work in that way.

56. *Mr. Collins.*] Do you think that the introduction of this text-book into the school curriculum will bring education more into accord with sound political principle?—No.

57. As a matter of sound political principle, do you not think the State has any right to take charge of religious instruction?—That is my opinion; it is also the opinion of my denomination.

58. Do you think this will be regarded by many people as a final solution of the educational difficulty?—I have not met with anybody who thinks it will be a final solution of the educational difficulty.

59. If the representatives of other bodies said it would be, or if they accepted it as final, making an absolute bar to any future improvement, would you be content?—I do not believe in finality at all.

60. Would it be a stepping-stone to denominationalism?—I would not say that those who are in favour of it are conscientiously advocating what they believe to be right; but, without attributing any wrong motive to them, if they say it will not lead to denominationalism, I cannot agree with them.

61. They may be mistaken?—I think they are mistaken.

62. *Mr. E. M. Smith.*] You appear here on behalf of your Church?—Yes.

63. Can you tell me the number of your Church members or adherents?—No, I cannot.

64. Is it given in any report?—I do not think it is; as a general rule we do not deal much in statistics.

65. You cannot give us information as to the strength of your body?—I do not like to make a statement that might be quoted, and which, without reference to documents, might prove to be inaccurate; but I could give you approximately the number.

The Chairman: That can be ascertained from the census returns.

67. *Mr. G. J. Smith.*] You say that the great body of your Church is against this movement with the exception of one or two: do you mean ministers or laymen—Church members?—We have two or three men in the ministry who are in favour of it; I do not know how many laymen, there may be a few, but no instructed Congregationalist, I am certain, is in favour of it.

68. Have you read the opinions of the great number of ministers who voice it?—That would not make the slightest difference.

69. You say you object to the introduction of this book into the schools; do you object to the proposal that the voice of the colony should be taken on the question?—I say honestly that question has not cropped up in our discussions on this subject; that rather refers to the large constitutional question as to whether one believes in the voice of the people. I would not object to take the voice of the people upon it.

70. You may not perhaps know that it provides for taking the voice of the people being obtained upon the question whether the laity are in favour of this text-book being introduced into the schools?—I would like to know whether that means individual committees can determine it, or whether it will be by districts—

71. The colonial vote?—I think that, occupying the position we do, to decide such a question by counting heads is an exceedingly dangerous principle; if every man in New Zealand were to take up a particular religious opinion, and I were opposed to it, I should still say, though hundreds of thousands were against me, they have no right to interfere with me, nor to force me to accept or support their views.

72. But, where an express provision is made for the teaching in schools, as represented by parents and guardians, there cannot be coercion there?—How would it work?

73. If parents of children object they are not to be there?—You have no right to use the funds of the colony to give religious instruction. If the teacher in any district where there was a strong sectarian feeling were to make use of the conscience clause, we believe that it would interfere with that man's position, so as to make him exceedingly uncomfortable.

74. You know there are people in the colony who object to some things now in the curriculum of the public schools?—Yes.

75. And that there are contributions made towards it by the State?—But these are not religious subjects.

76. As to the interpretation of these text-books, are you aware that the Bill now before the House provides that there shall be no comment; that the book shall be read without interpretation?—No interpretation, nor anything historical! that is worse. I would be more opposed to that. You never heard of Greek or Roman history without comment. That rather confirms me in my objection to the introduction of this book.

77. You object to it with comment, and you object to it without comment?—I object to religious instruction in the State schools, or anything that leads to it.

78. You say this will lead to religious tests?—I think so.

79. Do you apply that to the Committee, or to the Education Board, that they would insist on a religious test?—I am not sufficiently acquainted with the details of working the Act. The people who have the appointment of the teachers, I understand, are the Committees.

80. You said the Roman Catholics are waiting for other people to fight this matter out?—That is my opinion; they are not in favour of this, and they are simply waiting to see the result.

81. Then, you say, this is a step towards the establishment of a State church?—It is in that direction.

82. Upon what do you found that opinion?—Well, it is so obvious. It is the State taking the control of the teaching of religion.

83. What bodies would you look on as State churches. There is the Church of England, the

Presbyterian body, the Wesleyans—they are all strong bodies: which, or any of them, do you suggest as likely to accept a proposal for the control of religious teaching by the State in the public schools?—I think it is possible, if any were strong enough; but it is not likely. All I say is, that this is a step in that direction.

84. So far as denominational schools are concerned, if the gentlemen advocating the introduction of this book into the schools say they are averse to denominational teaching, I suppose you would receive their statement as being given in good faith?—That goes without saying; I hardly think that a question of that sort is necessary. I do not charge any one with improper motives, although I may disagree with him most strongly.

85. You next say that not one of the denominations are unanimously in favour of this movement. You know there are divisions in most bodies, as well as in Churches?—Yes.

86. That there is a majority and a minority?—Yes.

87. So that it is not to be wondered at that there should be disagreement?—Yes.

88. You say that is the case in the Methodist denominations?—The old Methodists and the Wesleyans are not unanimous.

89. Do you gather that from their official reports?—I know that they are not unanimous.

90. Then, speaking of the Churches generally, you know that there are certain members—individual members—who are not in favour of this movement?—So far as the Wesleyan body is concerned. I would not go further than that, but that is sufficient to substantiate my statement. But I believe, if you polled the Wesleyan body, there is a very considerable number of them would be found opposed to it. I know that the smaller bodies and the Primitive Methodists have not declared yet. But the question of smallness has nothing to do with questions of conscience and liberty, nor that of majority or minority. I never take into account number, when it comes to a question of personal liberty in matters of religious belief.

91. What I want to get at is: whether a large body of these Churches are in favour of this text-book being introduced into the public schools?—I believe that, if a vote were taken in New Zealand, public opinion would be found to be against what is now proposed; but the gentlemen here must know better than I do. I should say, on broad grounds of principle, nobody has the right to interfere with the religious convictions of other men; I do not want to be in the position of attempting to interfere with the religious convictions of any one.

92. *Mr. McNab.*] From what you have said, Mr. Glasson, it is affirmed that you have great experience both in the Old Country and in the Australian Colonies. The young people of New Zealand have been charged as being irreverent, and disobedient towards their parents, and also impatient of proper restraint: what do you think of that?—That is a very difficult question to answer; that question was put to me before. My honest conviction is, so far as my observation goes, that the children in South Australia and New Zealand are no worse in that respect than they are in the Old Country; making, as I said before, certain allowances. People who come here from the Old Country have broken up old associations, have cut themselves adrift from the old style of life in which they were born and grew up. When they come to New Zealand there is an absence of all that restraint that grew up about them in the course of ages. You have not such things in New Zealand, and consequently the parents feel themselves a little freer. It is only natural that children of such parents should have the same sense of personal freedom from restraint. I do not look with any thing like alarm on this, as the growth of disobedience or irreverence. With regard to South Australia, respect for those in authority, if they be respectable, is not, in my judgment, declining. But I do think that respect for authority, in the old sense of bowing down to it without seeing good reason for doing so, is dying out. And I think that is right. The moral sense of the community is stretching out in various directions. This is influencing character a great deal more than was formerly the case, and I think our public men will be made sensible of that before long.

93. If the schools have thorough religious instruction inside, even though they were denominational schools, do you think the reverence of children would be changed for the better?—I am opposed to denominational schools altogether.

94. Suppose you had an independent text-book?—I believe that reading Scripture texts without note or comment will have no appreciable effect on the morals or the religion of the children. I was brought up in one of the old national schools in my early years. In school we used to have the Church Catechism and the Bible. I should say from recollection that my reverence was not increased either for the Bible, or the catechism, or for the teaching. I can trace no distinctive influence one way or the other from reading those books in the National school. Other men's testimony might be different; it is not easy for us to go back and gather up all the influences that have been brought to bear upon us. Another person might disagree with me, and say "Your experience is not the same as mine." I believe it will be found—I do not know that I am permitted to say this—by all practical men, it has been so with all that I have conversed with, that they are opposed to religious instruction in the public schools.

95. *The Chairman.*] What is your opinion as to the effect likely to result from teaching the Irish National Scripture Lesson-book in the schools, viewing it from a Roman Catholic standpoint and the charge which they would prefer that our system had become distinctly Protestant?—The Roman Catholics do not believe in putting the Bible into the hands of the people unless it is interpreted by their Church. They have never, as far as I know, been in favour of putting an open Bible before the people without interpretation. They will say, "We have not supported the introduction of this book into the schools. We do not believe in reading the Bible without interpretation. If this book is to be introduced it must be properly interpreted." Then, they will have reason to say that those who were in favour of this movement were distinctly Protestant, and that this is simply endowing Protestant teaching, that they do not agree with it; that they want a grant for their own schools since the system of public education has become dis-

tinctly Protestant. I confess if these arguments were brought forward in favour of their claims, I do not see how you could refuse their demand. And I think they will put forward some such claims.

96. Would you say that the introduction of this book into the schools will break up our national system of education?—Yes.

97. *Mr. Willis.*] The time necessarily occupied in teaching this book will take up time now devoted to other purposes?—That would not be my way of looking at it. If the question were put to me, as to the relative importance of teaching the Bible and other subjects, I would say that the Bible must take pre-eminence, providing always that it be properly interpreted.

98. Then, you say it would not serve any purpose, and it would occupy a lot of time?—No, it would not serve the purpose of religious instruction.

99. *Mr. Collins.*] At the conclusion of the various lessons there is a list of words to be explained: I want to ask you whether it is possible to explain such words as “nativity,” “inspiration,” “revelation,” “atonement,” or “redemption,” without introducing dogmatic instruction?—I would say that these words should not be put in charge of the ordinary teacher to interpret. Fancy a public teacher explaining the “atonement,” “revelation,” or “inspiration.” The greatest theologians we have have not succeeded in doing that yet. That is one among many other reasons why I do not believe in having this book introduced into the schools. It is easy enough for a man who accepts a dogmatical creed; but the majority of intelligent men will not accept it in that dogmatical form. That only confirms my opinion, that this book, as a means of giving religious instruction, ought not to be introduced into our public schools.

Right Rev. the BISHOP of WELLINGTON (*Dr. Wallis*) examined.

100. *The Chairman.* Is the Committee to understand that you appear on behalf of the Anglican Church of the Diocese of Wellington, or as representing the whole of the Anglican Church of New Zealand?—I have not been deputed to represent either: I came here because I was invited. I shall be pleased to tell the Committee anything I know; but I have been here for so short a period that you must take my remarks *cum grano*.

101. Will you be good enough to give the Committee your views on the question of the introduction of the Bible, or the Irish National Scripture Lesson-books into the public schools of the colony. Many members of religious bodies are in favour of having the Bible read in the schools; others, for reasons that appear to them important, are in favour of this Scripture lesson-book being read as a text-book; would you be good enough to give us the views of the members of your Church in the Diocese of Wellington?—I have taken this work in hand because I had a mandate to do so from our General Synod. The Synod accepted the Irish National Scripture Lesson-book in preference to the Bible because there appeared to be some difficulty as to the conditions under which the Bible could be taught in the schools, and because other religious bodies were in favour of religious instruction being given to the children from some manual. I should perhaps say why the Synod itself was in favour of this text-book in preference to the whole Bible: it was mainly because teachers without training would find the Bible a difficult book to teach. The Scripture lesson-book contains a number of questions and answers which it was hoped would be useful to them, and it was thought well that we should all have the means of knowing what teaching was being given in the public schools.

102. Is there any further statement you wish to make to the Committee?—I think not, unless it is desired; I have already sent in a paper which contains my views more in detail.

The Chairman: The members of the Committee will ask you questions, which will give you the opportunity of elucidating your views more at length.

103. *Mr. Willis.*] Do you think it satisfactory that the reading of this book, as now proposed, will be available only for scholars of the Fourth and above the Fourth Standard? Do you mean that it would give complete satisfaction, or that it would give such satisfaction that nothing more will be asked for?—I can only say that I have talked with the clergy about it, and I have heard the views upon it of many members of the Church; and nobody has ever said that if we get this we shall ask for something more.

104. Do you consider it would be an important thing to have the children under the Fourth Standard instructed in religion as well as those of the higher standards?—I should be very glad if it could be done, but I do not think that anything more can be done than what is at present proposed.

105. Do you think this teaching will necessarily make the children more moral?—Not necessarily, any more than it would make the teachers more moral.

106. Do you think that our children are less moral than those of New South Wales?—I have not sufficient knowledge to enable me to form an opinion. I have been so short a time in this country that I know but little of New Zealand; I know nothing of New South Wales.

107. If it would not make the children more moral, what advantage is there in making it compulsory in the public schools?—It would not make the children more moral, any more than church-going makes those who attend the services more moral, but it would help them to become moral.

108. Do you think that the children of Roman Catholics, where religion is so strong a part of their education, are better in that respect than the children of our schools?—That is a question which a new comer can hardly answer; but I think they are likely to be more moral.

109. You mean that the children are likely to be more moral?—Yes.

110. You say those children would be likely to be more moral?—Yes, I think so; but whether they are or not I cannot possibly tell.

111. With regard to the teacher, do you not think it would militate against the position of the teacher—say a Catholic teacher—if he were compelled to read this book, and it was suspected that he was not reading it in all sincerity?—He ought not to be compelled to read it; I would have nothing to do with compelling such a teacher against his conscience.

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

religious teachers. It is for the Committee to give or withhold the use at their discretion. Efforts are now made in several district of this diocese to give religious instruction in the school outside school-hours, but those efforts do not fully meet the difficulties which the clergy are trying to cope with, for these reasons: Ministers very often are not fitted to interest and keep under control a large school; a man cannot conduct the discipline of a school unless he has had some training for the purpose; then the minister, if he goes to the school in the afternoon, finds the children fagged already with a hard day's work.

138. *The Chairman.*] Is it not possible to make an arrangement for the school to be available before school begins in the morning, or between the hours of opening and closing in the afternoon; could not some arrangement be made by the clergy of your diocese?—One clergyman does give instruction in the church before school begins.

139. But in the schoolroom, before school begins?—I suppose it would be possible, but the children would have to come earlier.

140. It has been arranged. I know where the Committee and the parents of the children were agreeable that a clergyman or other christian man of any denomination may come during the school-hours and impart religious instruction. Archdeacon Dudley, of Rangiora, was in the habit, for several years, of giving religious instruction from half-past eleven o'clock every Friday forenoon until half-past twelve o'clock. The parents of the children appreciated that gentleman's services. Now, I ask, why may not other clergymen follow his example?—In some places the clergy do take advantage of the provisions of the Act after school-hours, that is, after four o'clock; in other places an attempt has been made to give religious instruction before school begins. Objection, I fancy, would be made to "middle" day because it would cut short the children's time for recreation. At such an hour the children might be disinclined to attend, unless the clergyman was clever at teaching, and successful in interesting them.

141. It appears from a return laid on the table of the House that the clergy of all denominations take advantage of this provision only to the extent of 7 per cent. of the whole of the public schools of the colony?—The difficulties experienced by those who made such efforts were that many children would find it hard to come early in the morning; and in the afternoon that they would come to the lesson fagged after school duties; that in the middle of the day their hour of recreation would be cut short.

The Chairman: My object in asking these questions is to show that under the present Education Act it is possible for clergymen to impart religious instruction in the State schools if School Committees and parents and clergymen agree to make the necessary arrangements.

TUESDAY, 22ND OCTOBER, 1895.

Mr. ROBERT LEE, Chief Inspector of Schools for the Wellington District, examined.

The Chairman intimated that he would be glad to have any statement that Mr. Lee might like to make.

Mr. Lee: Have you any definite lines upon which to go, as I have not come prepared with any set speech.

The Chairman: Here are copies of the Irish National School-books. And you can speak to the general question?

Witness: I have not seen them lately, and I should like to look at them. [After doing so:] Do you wish to ask me any questions on any particular points?

142. *The Chairman.*] Will you just make a statement of the desirability and the probable effects of the introduction of the Irish National School-books into the public schools of the colony?—I may say, Sir, that, viewing the matter from all points, and considering the difficulties presented by the introduction of the religious element into the schools, I do not think it would be attended with the good results which are anticipated by those who are anxious to bring it forward. It would have the effect, I am afraid, of denominationalising the schools. It would, I fear, be a source of more or less difficulty on the one side, and on the other side of divisions and strife and contention. I think, as time went on, the several Committees would aim at placing in charge of the schools men of religious persuasion similar to that held by the majority of any particular Committee. I think, too, that although our teachers are now chosen for their capacity as teachers, for their intellectual education, and also for their fitness and aptness to teach, the time would come when they would be selected merely for their religious opinions. Then, again, there are so many sects of religion, and so many various renderings of Scripture and its translation generally, which would come before the teachers and their pupils, that I think it is probable it would lead to contention of one kind or another. It seems to me the business of the State is to deal with secular matters, with the training of intellectual powers, and that it is hardly the business of the State to also deal with the religious thought of the day. As to the reading of either the Bible or any given book, such as this Irish Lesson-book, as to the mere perfunctory reading of it in the schools, I think that would be attended with little gain, even from the standpoint of those who desire it. Unless some explanation were given by the teacher it would have very little value. I do not hold in any way with the interference of the clergy in the State schools, and I think this is only the thin end of the wedge to get it in. At present we have very great difficulty in getting the children to provide themselves with more than one reading-book, and this means the introduction of another not contemplated. That, however, is but a small matter; but looking at the whole question, as one has done from time to time, I can only say that the introduction of religious teaching into the schools is an element of discord, and has a tendency to import into our State schools system matter which is best taught by the clergy, or by those who have a special calling for the work. Our school-teachers at present are of no particular denomination, and we do not know or ask what

is their religious persuasion. At the same time the fact remains that they are not necessarily ardent religious teachers, as their calling is not that of religious teachers, but of intellectual instructors. In small schools I think the tendency would be almost immediately for the Committee to look out for teachers of their own persuasion, and I think that in large schools the differences of opinion of those in the neighbourhood whose children attend would render it impossible for the master to please the community. I might say that the religious element in the schools has, on the whole, had the effect in the past of retarding educational development. On looking back into the history of the past, I am persuaded that the religious element in educational institutions has had the effect of hindering progress in scientific directions, in which at present our system is in advance of that of bygone times.

143. Is that all?—I think I have nothing more to say.

144. *Mr. Willis.*] I would like to ask whether you think the time taken up in the reading of this book is likely to interfere with the other subjects, or be a loss in any other way?—That, in itself, is a small matter, but it is a detail which is not in any way provided for by those who are moving in this matter. They do not tell how much time for teaching they ask for.

145. Half an hour each morning in the week?—I do not think I should make a serious point of the time taken up, however ill-spaced. The teachers already complain of the burden of the syllabus. This is one more straw on the camel's back.

146. Do you think it would be prejudicial to the Catholic teachers?—I think I have already touched on that point. Indirectly I think it would. The religious feeling outside now is almost as strong as in the past; there is a feeling of intolerance—a Roman Catholic committee would want a Roman Catholic teacher, and a Wesleyan committee a Wesleyan.

147. There is a statement made by a Bishop in reply to a question, that he considers the children of the Roman Catholic schools, in consequence of religious teaching, were more moral than the children of other denominations. I will put the question to you in this way: Do you consider the children of the Roman Catholic schools, in consequence of better instruction, are of better morals than the others?—I have no evidence whatever; I do not think so; but then you know—I am not supposed to give a reason—it might be contended that the Roman Catholics have a lower class of children to deal with. There is no doubt of that. I do not make any comparison; but I do not think a tittle of evidence can be brought to show that they are a whit better.

148. *Mr. Collins.*] Mr. Lee has so completely covered the whole ground that he has left very little for me to elucidate. Do you consider it an advantage to have children of different denominations educated on one common ground? I mean the children of parents who follow the one common denomination. Do you think it will be likely to prove of moral and intellectual advantage?—I do not see it, one way or another. I do not know about the different religious persuasions. I do not suppose there is much religious talking in the playgrounds.

149. The absence of religion from the schools now, it appears to me, means that all children, of whatever religious views, can be trained up on one common ground. I want to get your opinion on this matter. Do you not think it will inculcate a general respect and feeling?—I should certainly say it would inculcate tolerance.

150. It has been asserted that the conscience clause did not enable those who wished to absent themselves from that particular lesson: do you not think a conscience clause could be introduced in that Bill which would become workable?—One of the effects of a conscience clause is that those who withdraw are pointed at by the others.

151. You know that is the case?—Yes. There is one more thing I should like to say. It might be inferred from what I say that I am opposed to religious instruction. I am not opposed to religious instruction. I will explain myself by saying this: Such a thing as this might be done: Let the State allow Wednesday afternoon in the week—it is a thought of my own, and you can take it for what it is worth—let one day in the week be taken in which religious instruction can be given anywhere, and the attendance so put in by the children count as attendance. The children not attending the religious instruction should attend the ordinary school. The curriculum of the school for that afternoon should not be in standard subjects, whereby the children not attendant at the ordinary school would lose ground. That would be a concession to religious instruction, and with it and the Sunday-school teaching those denominations who want religious instruction would be able to have such religious instruction of their own.

152. Do you think the children of the schools here are less respectful or less obedient than the children of other countries?—No, I do not; there may be some appearance of it, and I think the appearance may be accounted for. It is continually pointed out that we have a certain amount of larrikinism, and so on. I think that the freedom and want of veneration that we have in our colonies is due to two causes—namely, the great liberty and independence enjoyed by everybody in the colony, and the absence in our towns and communities of means of rational enjoyment. I am going now on ground that is a little beside the mark, perhaps; but I am a strong advocate for some system whereby our youth of the colony should have their amusements catered for.

153. Rational recreation?—Yes; if we had such provided, larrikinism would disappear. Funds should be found for this object.

154. From your opening remarks I judge that you are under the impression that even the introduction of these text-books would mean the disintegration of our State-school system?—Yes; that is a point.

155. *Mr. Lang.*] It has been said there is a great want of reverence on the part of our young people attending our public schools. Supposing that is so, do you think the reading of these text-books in schools would make a difference in the behaviour of the children?—I do not think so. I have said that the perfunctory reading of this book without note or comment would have very little effect indeed.

156. *Mr. McNab.*] Shortly stated, your position is this: that mere reading is of no use, and if

we go beyond the reading, and put that work into the hands of the teachers, it will tend to create all the feelings you mention; and the only hope is to put it in the hands of the ministers or others interested in teaching those who attend their own denominational churches?—Yes.

157. And you would go so far as to give them assistance, which you think would not interfere with their present duties?—Yes, on one half-day in the week. I think some of our teachers would volunteer to assist them on those days when they could be at liberty; but you would have the same objection raised as now to the clergymen going to the school. The clergymen say that privilege is of no practical value, for if some children have left school the others want to go too, as children value their time. In my suggestion it is practically a half-holiday to the children, to be allowed to go to the Sunday School on the Wednesday afternoon. If a child goes there on a Wednesday afternoon he takes his ticket to the teacher and that counts as his attendance for the afternoon. For the others, I would arrange an afternoon's work in such a way as would not give offence, and I would avoid teaching standard subjects, so that there could be no reasonable contention that the children attending religious classes were falling behind in standard work.

158. *Mr. Collins.*] I think the suggestion of Mr. Lee is a valuable one, and I think we can take cognisance of it; but are we not sitting as a Committee on the Irish School-books?—The only reason for my suggestion is, that if you pull down a house you should put up another in its place.

Mr. Lang: All I wanted was to show that Mr. Lee gave answers to questions; people reading his answers as printed might suppose that he was against religious teaching.

Mr. Lee: I merely remark that I do not wish it to be understood for a moment that I am opposed to religious instruction.

159. *The Chairman.*] For how many years have you been Inspector of Schools in New Zealand?—Twenty-two.

160. Have you been a teacher in the Old Country?—All my life.

161. How many years does that extend over?—I was teaching when I was twelve years old. It is forty-four years, in round numbers.

162. You speak with the experience of a practical teacher?—I have never been out of school during that time, except during holidays.

163. *Mr. Lang.*] I should like to ask how this idea would work in small schools, if four or five clergymen took charge on a Wednesday afternoon?—I have not said they should attend at the school; they could use any building. The State could allow the use of one or two rooms, if the school had several class-rooms. If not, the Sunday-school might be held anywhere convenient.

The Chairman made the following statement: On Wednesday, the 16th October, I called at the residence of Archbishop Redwood and saw the Rev. Father Dawson, who informed me that Archbishop Redwood was in Picton, and was not expected to return to Wellington for some time. I stated that I had called with a view of ascertaining if the Roman Catholic Church intended to accept the invitation of the Public Petitions Committee (M to Z) to be represented and give evidence before the Committee on the question of the introduction of the Bible, or the Irish National Scripture Lesson-Book into the public schools of the colony; since which, as Chairman of the Committee, I have received the following communications:—

“DEAR SIR,—

“St. Mary's Cathedral, Wellington, 16th October, 1895.

“*Re* our conversation this morning, an urgent telegram was sent to His Grace Archbishop Redwood, S.M., a copy of which, together with reply, is herein enclosed.

“Some of the resident Roman Catholic clergy were also consulted on the matter of giving evidence before the Committee. Their final decision will probably be known to-morrow. As, however, the claims of the Roman Catholics of the colony are a matter of public notoriety, and in view of the scant courtesy with which Catholic sentiment has been treated by the Petitions Committee, there is a strong feeling that the tendering of further evidence is useless.

“I am, &c.,

“THOMAS DAWSON, Administrator.

“Chairman of Petitions Committee, House of Representatives.”

“Archbishop Redwood, Picton.

“(Copy.—Urgent.)

“PETITIONS COMMITTEE taking evidence *re* Bible and Scriptural readings in schools desire authoritative information as to Catholic sentiment, and whether possible to accept plan as solution of educational difficulty.

“FATHER DAWSON, Wellington.”

“Rev. Father Dawson, Wellington.

“(Copy.)

“CATHOLIC sentiment opposed to plan *re* Bible-readings as solution of educational difficulty.

“ARCHBISHOP REDWOOD, Picton.”

The last paragraph in this letter does not refer to the M to Z Public Petitions Committee, it refers to another Committee of the House—I presume it refers to the A to L Petitions Committee, to which was sent the petition from the Roman Catholics in reference to their request that their schools might be examined by Government Inspectors of Schools.

APPENDICES.

I.

EVIDENCE to be laid before the Public Petitions Committee M to Z of the House of Representatives of New Zealand, by Major-General Schaw, Secretary of the Wellington Scripture Lesson-book Committee.

THE petitions which have been presented, asking that the "Irish National School-book of Scripture Lessons" may be introduced into the public schools of the colony indicate a widely-spread feeling amongst the population, of discontent with the existing system of education, in so far as it excludes the Holy Scriptures from the subjects taught in the schools, and of their acceptance of these Scripture lesson-books as a suitable form in which the essential truths of Christianity may be taught to the young, without the introduction of any debatable points on which different denominations of Christians hold different views.

The objection entertained by a great proportion of the colonists to the existing purely secular education has been evidenced almost from the time of its inception, some eighteen years ago, by the frequently-recurring efforts which have been made to obtain some kind of Bible instruction for the children; but these efforts have hitherto been fruitless, because there has hitherto been no agreement amongst the various religious bodies as to the form and method of the religious instruction to be given.

The Roman Catholics have so strongly objected to purely secular education that in the larger towns they have withdrawn their children from the public schools, and have voluntarily taxed themselves to provide education based on their religion in their own schools.

The Church of England, while objecting also to a purely secular education, has made no sufficient effort to raise funds for similar voluntary schools, but until lately has contended for denominational schools subsidised by the State.

The Presbyterians, Wesleyans, Methodists, and other Protestant religious bodies have all advocated Bible-teaching in the State schools, but with variations as to the mode in which it should be given.

The purely secular system of education introduced by the Legislature was opposed to the real desire of the people, the great majority of whom always have desired that the Bible should in some way be the basis of the education system; but how this was to be done without introducing inter-denominational dissensions was the difficulty. Yet this difficulty had been solved in Ireland many years ago, when the heads of the Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Presbyterian bodies conjointly drew up the "Irish National School-book of Scripture Lessons." These Scripture lessons, containing portions of the Bible specially adapted for the young, with questions, and notes explaining unusual words, &c., have been used for many years in the public schools of New South Wales with entire satisfaction.

It is on the common platform of the "Irish National School-book of Scripture Lessons," taught in the school hours by the regular teachers, that the Church of England, the Presbyterians, the Wesleyans, and the majority of the other Protestant Christian bodies are now at length united. (See annexed copies of resolutions.) They have formed themselves into associations in all the chief centres of the colony to obtain the common object of a Christian basis for the education of the children in the above-mentioned way. They represent about 80 per cent. of the population, as may be seen by referring to the religious census of 1893.

Most of the petitions now sent in to Parliament on this subject are the results of hurried, and therefore imperfect, canvasses, yet, in nearly every instance, it is reported that if more time and copies of the text-book had been available, many more signatures would have been obtained.

In some instances districts have been canvassed more fully, and in these the proportions of the electors for and against the scriptural lessons have corresponded with the religious statistics of 1893.

For instance, we would draw attention to the petition from Palmerston North, which was canvassed pretty fully, and where, out of 1,454 electors, 1,283 signed the petition, and only 171 refused. The analysis of this canvass (which is attached) is very significant, as it shows that the desire for scriptural education is not confined to a few denominations, but that nearly all agree in wishing for the introduction of the "Irish National School-book of Scripture Lessons." The fact that the Douay version, commonly used by the Roman Catholics, is adopted in many passages of the lesson-books, makes them acceptable to the Roman Catholics, who have largely signed the petitions. This, and other similar examples, seem to show that about three-quarters of the electors object to purely secular education, and that they accept the solution of the difficulty now proposed as to how scriptural teaching may be given without introducing denominationalism, or disturbing the free compulsory educational system now in force.

We would most strongly disclaim any desire to injure or interfere with the existing admirable system of national education. Our petition, if acceded to, will only place it on a sound basis, and make it more secure.

We sincerely hope that the entirely altered position in which this question now stands, owing to the union of the great Protestant Christian bodies in a common agreement, which has taken place since the subject was last brought before the Legislature, will lead Members of Parliament to view it not as a party question to be dealt with at the polling-booths, but as a happy solution of a perplexing problem which may now be given effect to without danger or difficulty or increased expense.

II.

At the General Synod of the Church of England in New Zealand, held at Nelson in February, 1895, the following resolutions were passed :—

On the 5th February : “ That this Synod is of opinion that it is desirable that the Education Act should be so amended as to contain a provision for imparting religious instruction by the teachers in the public schools on the model of the London School Board generally, with the use of the ‘ Irish National School-book of Scriptural Lessons ’; and with a conscience clause.”

On the 14th February : “ That, in order to give effect to the resolution of the 5th February on the subject of Bible teaching in public schools, this Synod respectfully requests the Right Reverend the Bishops to take steps, as far as possible in co-operation with heads of other religious bodies in New Zealand, for the purpose of pressing the desired reform on the Government and Legislature.”

FREDERICK WELLINGTON.

III.

The minute of the Presbyterian Assembly of 1894 on report of Committee on Education was as follows : “ Receive the report and thank the Committee for their diligence, and especially the convener; express the gratification of the Assembly at the increased interest and activity shown in the community generally on the subject of religious education in our public schools during the past year; and in regard to the chief recommendation of the report that the “ Irish Text-book of Scripture Lessons for National Schools ” should be favourably considered by the Assembly, as fitted to be a platform on which all the churches may reasonably be expected to unite. *Resolved*, That the Assembly cordially approves of this recommendation of the Committee, and desires the ministers and office-bearers of the church in their various districts to endeavour to awaken increased interest in it, and to co-operate with others for this object, so that by a combined effort the text-book may be introduced into our national schools, thus securing for our children the blessing of religious education in a satisfactory form and in harmony with sound political principles.”

A similar report was given in to the Assembly of this year (February, 1895), the finding on which was, “ Adopt the report.”

JAMES PATERSON.

IV.

The resolution of the Wesleyan Conference 1895, is as follows : “ While opposed to Government grants in aid of private schools, this Conference expresses its gratification at the revived interest manifested throughout the colony concerning the use of a scripture text-book in State schools. The Conference hereby expresses its conviction that the introduction of scripture lessons in our public schools is urgently called for in the best interests of the colony, and it pledges itself to co-operate with the churches in endeavouring to bring about such a change in the Education Act as will provide for this much-needed reform.”

WILLIAM BAUMBER.

V.

CLASSIFICATION OF PERSONS CANVASSED AT PALMERSTON NORTH, IN MAY-JUNE, 1895.

Denomination.	Number who signed Memorial.	Declined.	Majority	
			For.	Against.
Church of England	528	36	492	..
Presbyterian	227	10	217	..
Wesleyan	206	17	189	..
Roman Catholic	78	38	40	..
Salvation Army	62	..	62	..
Lutheran	54	2	52	..
Brethren	53	..	53	..
Bible Christian	34	1	33	..
Baptist	20	1	19	..
Congregationalist	5	1	4	..
Church of Christ	1	..	1	..
Adventist	1	6	..	5
Jew	..	2	..	2
Quaker	..	1	..	1
No Denomination	2	14	..	12
Unknown	12	42	..	30
		1,233	171	1,162
		1,454		1,112

Net result *for* : 1,112 adults, or 88 per cent.

Palmerston North, 18th July, 1895.

H. S. McKELLAR.

VI.

EXTRACT FROM THE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE RIGHT REVEREND THE BISHOP OF WELLINGTON, AT THE WELLINGTON DIOCESAN SYNOD, ON THE 2ND OCTOBER, 1895.

Scriptural Instruction in State Schools.

You will remember that the question of applying for the introduction of elementary Scriptural teaching into public schools was discussed at our late General Synod, and that the following resolutions were passed without a single dissident. (*See Appendix II.*)

This action of the General Synod is important, because it brings us into line, I think for the first time, with other great religious bodies in this colony. (*See Appendices III. and IV.*)

In compliance with the request of the General Synod, the Primate invited the Bishop of Christchurch, the Bishop of Nelson, and myself to draw up a Bill, and take such steps as we thought fit for submitting it to Parliament. The Bill was drafted at Christchurch by the Bishop, with the help of an association which has existed there for some time, and deserves our hearty gratitude for the part they have taken as pioneers in this movement. The Bishop of Nelson joined me in asking for some slight alterations, which were readily conceded. I have acted throughout in concert with an association recently formed in this city, which, like the Christchurch association, is composed of representatives of various Christian denominations, including the Salvation Army. Major-General Schaw has been good enough to act as our secretary, and has been at pains to ascertain the opinions of other similar associations which have now been formed in all parts of the colony. This work has taken some time, but it was held to be absolutely essential that we should present a united front, even if action were delayed for some weeks. General Schaw reports that the Bill has been accepted by all associations, and we hope that in a day or two it will be laid, if it has not been laid already, before Parliament.

By this time you are probably all familiar with the proposed text-book. Any who have not seen it can procure it at the Bible and Tract Dépôt in Willis Street. It is not by any means a perfect manual of Scripture history; how can it be when the extracts from the Old Testament end with the death of Moses? Here and there we miss familiar phrases of our Bible. The authorities of the Roman Catholic Church, who helped to draw up the book, naturally demanded that the Douay should be occasionally substituted for the authorised version, and this was done. But, meagre as it is, it is accepted by all; it has been used for many years in the schools of New South Wales, and, I am told, without causing any friction.

In petitioning for the use of this book there are one or two things which we should not forget.

First, this application cannot be justly stigmatized as a compromise. We are giving up nothing which we either have or hope to have.

Secondly, it is not a movement in the direction of what is called denominationalism. If it succeeds it will render it a harder thing than it is now, if that be possible, to establish denominational schools. Many of our people would at once say to us if such an attempt were made: "The Bible is taught in our schools; is not that enough? Why ask us to subscribe for Church schools? You can teach Church doctrine on Sundays." I do not say that this objection is unanswerable; but I am quite certain that it would be very strongly urged. We do not propose to close the one Church school in the diocese, the kindergarten, in the Tinakori Road, Wellington. We do not pledge ourselves that under no circumstances will we erect another school, and we do not ask for a similar pledge from others. But for such a school we could expect no subsidy from the State. There is a strong prejudice in the minds of our fellow-countrymen in favour of educating our children side by side according to a uniform system, and no Legislature is likely to view with favour the establishment of rival schools in the same place.

Thirdly, the measure proposed is meant to be fair to all Christian bodies. If it could be shown that any clause, or part of a clause, in the Bill is devised in the interest of our own, or any other, denomination, I am sure that we should be among the first to desire its modification. Nor is it sought to force religious instruction upon any teacher or upon the child of any parent who, for conscience sake, does not desire it.

Lastly, there is a strong desire among us not to do the slightest injury to our present free and compulsory system. We pride ourselves justly that every little township and settlement in the colony is provided with efficient teaching. Our hope is that our excellent system of education may be placed on a still firmer basis.

VII.

CONSTITUTION of the SCRIPTURE TEXT-BOOK ASSOCIATION.

Place.	Denomination.	Members.		Place.	Denomination.	Members.	
		Clerical.	Lay.			Clerical.	Lay.
Auckland..	Church of England	3	0	Nelson ..	Church of England	3	3
" ..	Presbyterian ..	2	0	" ..	Wesleyan ..	1	2
" ..	Wesleyan ..	1	0	" ..	Baptist ..	0	1
" ..	Baptist ..	1	0	Christchurch ..	Church of England	3	2
" ..	Congregational ..	1	0	" ..	Presbyterian ..	2	1
Napier ..	Church of England	6	0	" ..	Wesleyan ..	2	2
" ..	Presbyterian ..	3	0	" ..	Baptist ..	1	1
" ..	Wesleyan ..	2	0	" ..	Congregational ..	1	1
" ..	Baptist ..	2	0	" ..	Free Methodist ..	1	1
Wellington*	Church of England	7	5	" ..	Primitive Methodist	1	1
" ..	Presbyterian ..	2	2	" ..	Bible Christian ..	1	1
" ..	Wesleyan ..	3	1	" ..	Church of Christ ..	0	2
" ..	Primitive Methodist	0	1	Dunedin ..	Presbyterian ..	5	0
" ..	Salvation Army ..	0	2	" ..	Wesleyan ..	3	0

* The Methodist clergy and 1 layman (Mr. Luke the Mayor) have withdrawn temporarily from the association pending the decision of their conference, in January, 1896, as to the suitability of the Scripture text-book.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (2,050 copies), £28 6s.

By Authority: SAMUEL COSTALL, Government Printer, Wellington.—1895.

Price 1s.]

