

Enclosure in No. 2.

SIR,—

Town Schools Committee, Nelson, 11th December, 1897.

I have the honour to forward to you from the Town Schools Committee the following resolutions, passed at a special meeting held on the 10th instant, viz. :—

“That the Committee respectfully acknowledge, through the Education Board, the receipt of a letter from the Minister of Education, with an enclosure; but whereas the communication received from the Education Department, charging the Committee with a violation of the Education Act, is only an extract from a letter sent to the department, and is without heading and without signature; and whereas when a complaint is made against a Civil servant it is use and wont to send the inculcating document to the said servant that he may know fully the charge laid against him, and the name of the informer, the Committee resolve to ask the Minister of Education to forward to the Committee the letter making the above complaint, and the members of the Committee engage, on receipt of same, to supply the department with the fullest information as to their conduct under the Education Act.”

“That, in regard to the letter of Mr. S. S. Bolton, anent religious instruction in the State Schools, the Education Board be respectfully desired to deal with Mr. Bolton's letter in the same way in which the Board dealt with a letter of complaint from Mr. H. Lavery, Charleston, concerning which the Press report says: ‘Resolved, To refer the writer to the clause in the Act which directs that all such matters must come to the Board through the local Committee.’”

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Nelson Education Board.

J. P. KEMPTHORNE, Chairman.

No. 3.

MEMORANDUM for the SECRETARY, Education Board, Nelson.

IN reply to your letter of the 15th instant, in which you transmit copy of a letter from the Nelson School Committee upon the subject of my letter of the 12th ultimo, I am directed by the Minister to say that he does not consider it desirable that he should enter into an argument with the School Committee, as the Board by its method of dealing with the question apparently expects him to do. It should be unnecessary to say that the Committee exercises its functions subject to the general supervision and control of the Board, which the Minister therefore considers as the authority responsible for the observance of the law in the schools of its district. The Board clearly has the means and the authority to satisfy itself whether the report which has been brought under its notice is or is not a correct statement of the facts; and the Minister considers it due to him that his request for information concerning that report should receive more serious treatment than the Board has seen fit to accord to it.

I am therefore to beg that the Board will again take the matter into consideration, and be good enough to advise him of the result.

E. O. GIBBES,

For the Secretary.

Education Department, Wellington, 24th December, 1898.

No. 4.

MEMORANDUM from the NELSON EDUCATION BOARD.

The Secretary, Education Department, Wellington.

I HAVE have the honour, by direction of the Board, to forward you the enclosed copy of a letter received from the Nelson School Committee, in reply to a request that they would state definitely whether or no religious instruction was being given during school-hours in the Nelson Schools.

1st March, 1898.

STEAD ELLIS, Secretary.

Enclosure in No. 4.

SIR,—

Town Schools Committee, Nelson, 10th February, 1898.

I have the honour, by request of the Committee, to forward to you the following resolution, passed at a special meeting held on January 31st, viz. :—

“That, in answer to the Board's request to be definitely informed as to whether religious instruction is given in the Nelson Town Schools during school-hours, this Committee reply that religious instruction is not so given.

“That, further, the Committee express regret that the Board should have been led to take action on what is to them an anonymous letter, and beg to point out that, since the Education Act provides that the schools shall be open ‘to inspection by an Inspector,’ and the time-table posted in every room shows the work being done, the above request of the Board was unnecessary.

“That, further, the Committee, *ex gratia* and without prejudice to the rights of interpretation vested in the civil Courts of the colony, beg to inform the Board as follows: By the Education Act twenty hours' teaching per week are required. In the Nelson Schools twenty-four and a half are given. Outside of these hours Bible instruction is given in the schools for half an hour per week, and also, by arrangement with the teachers, a secular lesson is given at the same time to the children of parents desiring the same; but this secular lesson is not part of the time-table.”

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Nelson Education Board.

HENRY HOBDEN, Secretary.