

No. 5.

SIR,—

Education Department, Wellington, 7th March, 1898.

I have the honour, by direction of the Minister of Education, to acknowledge the receipt of your Secretary's memorandum of the 1st March, enclosing a copy of a letter addressed to you by the Nelson Town School Committee on the 10th February.

Mr. Walker observes that your Board still practically declines the responsibility of directly informing him as to the course adopted by the Town School Committee in its arrangements with respect to religious instruction. The Board has simply submitted to his view, without note or comment, the Committee's statement of its own case.

The Committee's statement first asserts that religious instruction is not imparted in school-hours, and then it explains that during the half-hour of religious instruction pupils can, if their parents desire it, receive secular instruction. The Minister reminds you again that your Board has full power of inspection, and is responsible to see that every school entered in the quarterly returns for capitation is conducted as a public school in accordance with the terms of the Education Act. I am therefore to ask you to use your powers of investigation, and to inform the Minister what are the school-hours in the Nelson Town Schools, and what are the inducements, if any, by which any pupils are led to attend school for purposes of secular lessons out of school-hours.

I have, &c.,

WM. JAS. HABENS,

Secretary for Education.

The Chairman, Education Board, Nelson.

No. 6.

MEMORANDUM from the NELSON EDUCATION BOARD.

The Secretary, Education Department, Wellington.

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7th ultimo, respecting the subject of religious instruction in the Town Schools, which has in due course been laid before the Board. The senior Inspector has been instructed to make inquiries, and will report at the next meeting of the Board, when an answer to your letter will be forwarded.

1st April, 1898.

STEAD ELLIS, Secretary.

No. 7.

(Telegram.)

25th April, 1898.

PLEASE say if Hon. the Minister of Education can receive a deputation from this Board on Thursday or Friday next—Friday preferred. Kindly reply at once.

ELLIS, Secretary, Education Board, Nelson.

Secretary, Education Department, Wellington.

No. 8.

(Telegram.)

26th April, 1898.

IF it will suit the members of the deputation, the Minister will receive them on Friday at three. Please state the object of the deputation.

WM. JAS. HABENS, Secretary for Education.

The Secretary, Education Board, Nelson.

No. 9.

(Telegram.)

26th April, 1898.

BOARD's deputation will wait on Minister 3 p.m. Friday. Business: proposed Westport High School, and religious instruction Nelson Schools.

Secretary, Education Department, Wellington.

S. ELLIS.

No. 10.

SIR,—

Wellington, 28th April, 1898.

I have the honour to hand you a report of the Chief Inspector *re* Bible teaching in the Nelson Schools, in preparation for the interview to-morrow.

I am, &c.,

GEO. TALBOT,

Chairman of the Board.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

Enclosure in No. 10.

REPORT ON RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION in the NELSON CITY SCHOOLS.

SIR,—

In accordance with instructions received from the Board, I have inquired into the arrangements made for imparting religious instruction to the children attending the Nelson City Schools.

I find that, by a resolution of the Nelson School Committee, the ordinary school-hours have recently been shortened to twenty-four hours and a half weekly, and that the teachers' time-tables are arranged accordingly. The time for opening school varies in the different schools on different days. The usual time is 9.30 a.m.; but on Wednesday morning, at the Central School, Brook