

ecclesiastical discipline on these subjects may no doubt join the teaching profession in New South Wales, Queensland, &c., in good faith. They may also conduct such mis-called "unsectarian" Scripture lessons in good faith, being unaware that they are doing what no Catholic instructed hereon and loyal to Catholic faith and conscience would dream of doing. A like remark applies to Catholics generally who enter the teaching profession in New South Wales or Queensland as some frogs enter wells or as some people enter matrimony, without sufficient thought or consideration of what the plunge may involve. Catholics well instructed on the matters mentioned above could not in conscience conduct the so-called "unsectarian" "general religious instruction" referred to. Then I say further over: The Catholic teacher who teaches it—this "unsectarian" instruction—is for the time false to Catholic principles, Catholic conscience, and Catholic ecclesiastical discipline. Owing to the substance or effect of past and present regulations, or to the well-known views of high-placed administrative officials, it is at present no easy matter to secure for publication expressions of opinion from Catholic or other objecting teachers at present in the employment of various Government Bible-extracts States of Australia. So far as Catholic teachers are concerned this is, however, not at all necessary, seeing that the Catholic position in regard to "unsectarianism," "common," "undogmatic," or "undenominational" "general religious instruction" is so clear and so emphatic. Outside and beyond this there are, however, sufficient indications of the discontent of conscience with which the system is viewed by Catholic teachers with some knowledge of and regard for the laws and principles of their Church that bear upon the sectarian "unsectarianism" and dogmatic "undogmatism" of the State religion. No educationist in Australia has, probably, so intimate a knowledge of the Catholic teachers' hearts of New South Wales as Bishop Gallagher of Goulburn, who is in constant touch with them. In a letter to me he declares that the Catholic teachers in his wide jurisdiction positively "hate the lessons" from those sectarian mutilations of the Scriptures which (devised by Carlile and Whately for the avowed purpose of proselytizing Irish Catholics) had to be banished from the national schools of that unhappy land. The position of such Catholic teachers is somewhat like the position of the League clergy. These clergy denounce the secular system as "pagan," "barbarous," "Godless," "dogmatically secular," and degrading to morals, yet for nearly forty years they have serenely sent their children to be brought up in the "paganism," "barbarism," "dogmatic secularism," and moral degradation of that system (see Catholic Federation series of publications, No. 4, pp. 2-3). Official testimony (quoted in my principal evidence) goes to show that some years ago the teachers' "general religious instruction" was deprived of any useful religious character in 50 per cent. of the schools. The testimony of Rev. G. A. Chambers, M.A. (Warden of Trinity Grammar School, Sydney), shows that at the present time this "general religious instruction" is to a very considerable extent practically abandoned or rendered useless (*Sydney Daily Telegraph*, 20th July, 1914), and Archdeacon Irvine declared, in a deputation to the Minister of Education on religion in the schools, that "the members of the committee saw the danger of the country becoming to a large extent materialistic" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 6th May, 1914). Other evidence could easily be adduced to a like purport and effect. Information received by me shows what follows: (a) That, as stated, a certain number of Catholic teachers conduct the State biblical-extract lessons in good faith through being uninstructed or ill instructed in the Catholic laws and principles bearing upon the matter; (b) that others shirk the lessons as far as they dare, or make them as Catholic as they dare, or as perfunctory as they can, or turn them into "silent" lessons.

31. Perhaps Bishop Cleary would say why the Roman Catholic Bishops in Australia have not forbidden the Roman Catholic teachers in the State schools to give these lessons. The fact is that they do. Is the Bishop aware that Roman Catholics do not abstain from entering the service, but enter it as freely as any one else does?—I do not know whether Catholics enter as freely the Public Service as any one else; I do not know that the Bishops have refrained from condemning sectarian instruction in the State schools by Catholics; I do know that there is with us a tribunal called the tribunal of penance, before which the individual teacher, if he is a practical Catholic, presents himself periodically for personal direction; and I do know, furthermore, that if personal direction is asked or needed in this matter the priest in charge must give it, and his personal direction can only take one turn—"You cannot conduct these so-called 'unsectarian' religious lessons." But, Mr. Chairman, it is one thing to give a direction to a man with a family of six or seven children that he must either leave the Public Service or continue giving these lessons. It puts him upon the horns of a dilemma. He practically says to the teacher, "Get out of the service. Go without your bread-and-butter." And the man with the six or seven children will begin to think whether it is for him a lesser evil to disobey the law of the Church or to face the starvation of himself and his little ones. So you see the position in which the wretched law there puts the man. It penalizes him worse than it would penalize the magman or the coiner. I need not ask the Committee if that is a fair position to put any teacher in—a position where he must either starve or go against his conscience. I will say more. If a law were passed in New Zealand to-morrow offering place and pay and position to Jews who would work on Saturday and eat pork there would be many Jews who would take the position and eat the pork. And that is no reflection upon the body of the Jewish people; it is merely a statement of the weakness and frailty of human nature. The law in New South Wales, in putting a similar alternative before Catholic teachers, counts not upon the fidelity to conscience of the great body of Catholics, but it counts upon the frailty of a certain number of them, and it invites them into the service on these conditions: "We buy your conscience in open market. You must do what we want you to, whether you obey your conscience or not." That is the position in which Catholic teachers are placed in New South Wales, and it is the position in which the League wishes to place every teacher in this Dominion, although it is known to the League that, I suppose, 90 per cent. of the certificated teachers of this Dominion do not want to teach these lessons.