

twice as large in Queensland as it is in New Zealand, but as far as I can judge from public opinion there is not the slightest chance of our State reverting to the denominational system, and the Roman Catholic religious teachers have the same opportunity as any other Church in giving instruction in the State schools.

"Referring to your questions in their order I have to state—

"(1.) The system is generally accepted as a fair and equitable way of meeting what the majority of our people believed to be a weakness in our previous system. In the referendum which was taken on the matter before the Bill was introduced the principle was affirmed by a majority of over seventeen thousand, and if a referendum was again taken I am confident that it would be reaffirmed by a much larger majority.

"(2.) During the debate when the Bill was before the House, and the discussion in the Press at the same time, stress was laid on the point that the introduction of the system would cause sectarian bitterness and strife. The actual results of experience have shown that there was no foundation for such fears, and some of those who were opposed to the system now frankly admit that they were mistaken.

"(3) and (4). Personally I have not heard of any friction arising *re* your questions (a), (b), (c), and from a general talk which I had with the Under-Secretary some three months ago I understand that the whole scheme is working very smoothly. The attitude of the teachers, many of whom are Roman Catholics, is friendly. No teachers have been called upon to resign for this cause. I am not aware of any friction between religious teachers and School Committees. There can be no trouble between parents and teachers, as under the conscience clause no child is compelled to attend special religious instruction against the wishes of the parent.

"(5.) In my opinion there is not a growing public opinion in favour of giving the denominational grant, the trend being in the opposite direction. The Roman Catholics have the same opportunity as other religious bodies in our State schools. Under our system of State school scholarships any boy or girl under fourteen years of age who is able to secure over 50 per cent. of examination marks is entitled to a State scholarship, and during recent years, and before the present system of Bible-teaching was introduced, it was decided that these State-school scholarships would be available in any public grammar school or other high school approved by the State, controlled by any denomination, and in many cases the holders of State-school scholarships have elected to go to institutions controlled by the Roman Catholic Church. I believe that in this direction we have gone as far as possible.

"I will be pleased to give you any further information, and I have no objection to my name being used.

"The State has been my home for thirty-five years. I have visited nearly every part, and I have just returned from an extended tour in the far north and extreme north-west, covering over five thousand miles, in the course of which, along with the Home Secretary, I have been present at the inspection of schools, and have met teachers and ministers of various Churches. While other matters of local interest were brought up by deputations of School Committees, in not a single instance was the slightest adverse criticism made on the working of the Bible in State schools system.

"Yours sincerely,

"JAMES ALLEN,

"M.L.A. for Kurepa (one of the metropolitan electorates)."

47. That letter, addressed to Mr. Williams, your secretary, has not found its way into your evidence?—No, certainly not.

48. You were not anxious to let the public know about it?—No, I was giving evidence of friction.

49. I can quite understand that?—What we are giving here is evidence of friction. That is not evidence of friction; that is evidence of smooth running. I have no doubt you could get the evidence of a lot of people in Queensland who think it is running smoothly, and a lot who believe it is running with friction. We have given the evidence of those who think it is running with friction.

50. In starting out and making inquiries in order to direct the public on such a matter as this you think it quite fair to conceal from the public the fact that you received evidence that shows your fears are groundless?—It is not a question of whether I think it is right. The position is that we got a large amount of evidence. We are not supporting the case for the Bible in schools. We have evidence from certain people who are in favour of Bible in schools and the evidence of certain people who are against it. It would be just as reasonable to ask us to call you as a witness for our case. We are presenting our side of the case.

51. Now, to come to the other circular that you issued signed by the same gentleman, that was addressed, I understand, to a number of ministers of religion in New Zealand?—Yes.

52. It is dated the 20th July, 1914. Would you mind reading it?—You are cross-examining—I am not. If you ask me to read it I will do so.

53. Would you mind telling us how many replies you received to the circular?—I cannot. The replies are still coming in. As far as I know nearly a hundred replies have been received, and all that have been received so far are before the House; but this matter has been worked by the organizer, who is in Christchurch.

54. And I presume you have put in the replies that are not favourable?—If they were petitions to the House they would be put in, as you will see if you read the document. I will read it for you. It states,—

"DEAR SIR,—

"Christchurch, 20th July, 1914.

"A large and ever-increasing number of ministers are opposed to the platform of the Bible in State Schools (and Right of Entry and Compulsion of Teachers) League. Yet Parliament