

is being persuaded that nearly all Protestant ministers are in favour of the scheme. Silence is taken as assent. We therefore respectfully urge that it is the duty of all ministers who are opposed to the scheme to prevent misconception and to state the position fairly by declaring their position. The League very promptly announces the divergence of any minister or teacher from the position of opposition to the League expressed by the body or Church to which he belongs. This circular is being sent to a large number of Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, and Congregational ministers. We hope you will sign your name opposite all or any of the objections on the adjoining page which represent your grounds of objections. If you wish to add any other objection please do so. If you wish to state objections in a different form from those set out please arrange them in a similar way. All you send must be on one sheet of paper, on one side of it, and signed below. Please return the declaration in the enclosed stamped envelope by return mail. The declarations will be presented to Parliament in the form received, so that each minister speaks only as he wishes.

“Rev. T. A. WILLIAMS (Baptist)."

“JOHN CAUGHLEY, M.A.,"

“Elder, St. Andrew's, Christchurch."

“To the Hon. the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned humbly sheweth:—

“1. That while in favour of any proper and fair method of providing religious instruction for the children of New Zealand, I am opposed to the Religious Instruction in Schools Referendum Bill on the following grounds:—

Signature.

“(a.) That it provides for the right of entry to give sectarian teaching in State schools.

“(b.) That it would cause the Word of God to be taught under compulsion by State teachers.

“(c.) That many taxpayers would have to pay towards a form of religious instruction opposed to their religious beliefs.

“(d.) That it proposes to decide a religious matter involving acute differences of belief by a majority vote irrespective of justice.

“(e.) That the proposed form of ballot-paper is unfair, since electors would have to vote for two issues or none, though they might favour Bible-reading and not right of entry.

“2. Your petitioner therefore prays that Parliament will so act as to prevent any of the above injustices proposed in the above Bill.

“Signature: (Rev.)

“Address: ”

55. Are you aware that you have received intimations from several ministers of religion in response to that circular that they are favourable to the Bible in schools?—I should not be a bit surprised.

56. How many replies have you received?—They are still coming in. As far as I know, I think eighty-six have been put before the House, and I believe there are about seven or eight members of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church whose petitions have not yet been presented.

57. In your statement you say “The Presbyterian, the Congregational, and the Lutheran Churches in Queensland all opposed the adoption of the ‘system’ there.” I think you are mistaken in that?—I am quite content to be corrected. I wish it to be understood that I am appearing for the executive, and I am not cognizant of the truth of all the statements, and if you can show me I am wrong I am willing to admit it.

58. If you will look at the first paragraph of this circular, which is the decision of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in 1908, and issued by the Moderator of Australia, you will see your statement is not correct [circular handed to witness]?—That seems to me to be quite an authentic document, and it would show that the Presbyterian Church was not against it, and to that extent the statement I have read is not correct.

59. If you altered your statement and said that some Presbyterian ministers were opposed to it you would be right?—I am quite prepared to do that after seeing the circular. In view of that I quite see the document shows that officially the Presbyterian Church accepts it.

60. In your statement you speak of the Education Commissioners in New South Wales, and you say, “They were profoundly impressed by the scheme of moral instruction in vogue in the State schools of France.” You further say, “The system has so far failed as a moral factor that the Commissioners recommend the adoption of the French scheme of moral instruction.” The Commissioners reported separately?—Yes, it should be “Commissioner.” I am aware of the fact that the men reported separately. It is Mr. Knibbs's report we are referring to.

61. Then are you aware that his fellow-Commissioner, of equal weight with himself, gave as his report—“It will suffice to say that our own State seems to have made the best attempt at solving the difficulty of religious instruction in schools by the facilities it gives clergymen and accredited teachers under clause 17 of the Public Instruction Act, and by the excellent general Scriptural instruction contained in the Irish National Scripture-books which are still in daily use”?—I understood the other Commissioner had reported differently on this one point. I should like to quote the whole of it. It states, “The teaching of religion has no place in the regular programme of the French school, and it does not appear that there exists any special provision for dogmatic or general instruction in the subject. The existence of God is assumed, and reverence to His name inculcated. One's personal views on the value of religious teaching to children of public-school age need not be intruded here. It will suffice to say that our own State