

1914.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

(REPORTS OF THE) ON THE PETITIONS FOR AND AGAINST THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION
IN STATE SCHOOLS REFERENDUM BILL, TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE AND
APPENDICES.

(MR. G. M. THOMSON, CHAIRMAN.)

*Reports brought up on the 30th day of October, 1914, and, together with the Minutes of Evidence and
Appendices, ordered to be printed.*

ORDER OF REFERENCE.

Extract from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

FRIDAY, THE 10TH DAY OF JULY, 1914.

Ordered. "That a Committee be appointed, consisting of ten members, to consider all matters relating to school-teachers, education, and public instruction generally, public-school training of teachers, higher education, technical education, manual instruction, and such other matters affecting education as may be referred to it; to have power to call for persons and papers; three to be a quorum: the Committee to consist of Mr. Guthrie, Mr. Hanan, Mr. McCallum, Mr. Malcolm, Mr. Poland, Mr. Sidey, Mr. Statham, Mr. G. M. Thomson, Mr. J. C. Thomson, and the mover."—(Hon. Mr. ALLEN.)

REPORTS.

No. 487.—Petition of Reverend Professor WILLIAM HEWITSON, and 89 similar Petitions (as per
Schedule, *vide* I.—13).

OBJECTING to certain provisions embodied in the Religious Instruction in Schools Referendum Bill.

I am directed to report that the Committee has heard evidence on the subject-matter of these petitions—much latitude being allowed witnesses in the desire to get all the facts—and is of opinion that the New Zealand State system of free, secular, and compulsory education (under which our children have received incalculable benefits, and under which, after thirty-seven years' experience, our people—the immense majority of whom have passed through our schools—compare most favourably morally, socially, and religiously with the people of any other part of the world) should be maintained. Further, that the Committee is fully alive to the value of biblical and religious instruction, and is of opinion that full opportunity should be given for the adoption of a voluntary system, such as that known as the Nelson system, in which the teaching is imparted outside the statutory school hours, under which the State exercises no authority in religious matters, and under which there is no compulsion or violation of rights of conscience.

30th October, 1914.