

291. How do you manage in the case of what are ordinarily called ragged children?—We refuse no one. First of all, we refuse no Catholic, and no others as a rule apply to us. We refuse no Catholic, except a boy who has been at our school and has been committed to the industrial institution for ill conduct. We do not readmit him into our schools for a long time. That is the only instance in which we refuse any pupil admission to our primary schools.

292. In the practical working of your system, how do you manage to secure that children come clean in person?—Our teachers look after that. If it is a serious case the clergy remonstrate with the parents, and ask that the children be sent clean to school; and if this is not done we have the children washed and made decent before they come into school.

293. Are many of the children educated in your diocese the children of poor parents?—Yes. I dare say the majority of my people are poor; but we have no abject poverty in the country any where. I am speaking of people of small means—labouring people, and with large families.

294. Can you say whether this weekly payment or payments for the education of the children is felt a severe financial strain?—A very serious strain. There are many with very small wages, comparatively speaking, and they have to pay the expenses of the Church, also contribute towards the erection of schools, and then support all these schools. It is a very serious matter for them.

295. Can you state, from your own knowledge and observation, whether the class termed "ragged children" are practically refused admission to the State schools?—I am not able to say from my own knowledge; but I have heard that they have been refused on what I considered fair authority; but I am not able to state it as a fact within my own personal knowledge.

296. Can you state, from your own observation, whether or not the ragged children in the City of Dunedin, for example, are being educated by the State?—I think some are educated by the State.

297. You have said you believe the standard of efficiency in your schools is equal to the standard current in the State schools?—Yes.

298. You arrive at that from personal examinations conducted by yourself?—Or that, together with the fact that we get pupils who have been at the Government schools, and who have not made much progress. At the same time I wish to qualify the latter statement. Their want of efficiency may not be the fault of the system; it may be the fault of the children themselves; but, judging from the percentage of marks made by the children of public schools at their examinations and the percentage gained by children of my own school, who are put through a more severe test and examination, I come to the conclusion that our children are certainly as efficient, and more efficient, in many instances.

299. Is there any system in operation in England* which, if brought into operation in this colony, would satisfy the Catholics of this colony?—No system that would satisfy us. The Catholics in England are intensely dissatisfied with the present system, but the system there is very much more equitable and just than the system here, but it does not satisfy the Catholics or the Church of England.

300. Do you understand the system which is ordinarily defined as the system of payment by results?—I do.

301. How would you define that system?—It means this: that there should be first of all a certain allowance as an average attendance of pupils. I consider that only fair to the teachers, because children are not all equally clever, and parents are not always solicitous that they make progress, and it is very disheartening to a teacher to be placed in an unfavourable position through no fault of his own. I consider that the system ought to include payment on a certain average attendance, and then any further payment should be made in accordance with the results produced from his teaching in the school.

302. Would such a system meet the views of the Catholics of this colony?—Quite; they would be very glad indeed to have such a system.

303. What average of attendance would you consider reasonable to form the basis of such a system—the lowest average of attendance?—That would be decided entirely by the circumstances of the locality. An average attendance which would be fair in one locality would not be fair in another. The average attendance in a thickly-populated locality should be more, in my judgment, than that required in a sparsely-populated one. That is a mere matter of detail altogether.

304. I understand that you said that the payment by results will satisfy you as a petitioner?—Yes, fully.

305. *Mr. Feldwick.*] You said that the fee in your schools is 1s. per week per child?—That is the charge we have in our common schools.

306. Do you know of cases of special hardship if the charge were enforced?—I know many instances of special hardship, but we do not enforce it in cases of hardship. In cases such as men out of employment and helpless widows, we make up the sum ourselves in order that the teachers may not suffer. In one school I had I was obliged to pay £25 one year, £26 another year, and £27 4s. another year in order to make up for the fees, so that the teacher should not sustain a loss.

307. So that the teachers' salaries are precarious, depending on these fees?—We generally give them a fixed salary, and if the fees do not amount to the salary we have to make up the balance.

308. Do you think, in the event of State aid being given, you would have schools in the smaller towns?—Certainly; we have them in the smaller towns at this moment. We had a school for years at which there were only fifteen Catholics, and we paid a teacher for teaching these fifteen children.

309. What would you say in the case of sparsely-populated rural districts where there is a Government school?—That is an exceptional case, and must be treated exceptionally.

310. You are aware that in Mr. Curtis's Bill those not availing themselves of State schools should provide their own buildings. Would you be prepared to do that?—We are prepared to take an instalment of justice on the understanding that we are liberty to demand full justice.

311. Have you formed any idea of what would be a sufficient sum to be paid per child based on