

626. Then, there is absolutely daily religious instruction in some of the schools?—Yes; in all of them.

627. Do you find that the Roman Catholic children have a better knowledge—this question may appear a little invidious, I admit—of Scripture than children of other denominations? Probably you are not able to answer the question?—I think I am in a position to make an answer from my own point of view. I say that since for good reasons we do not constitute the Bible as a text-book of religious instruction, so neither do we regard Scripture history as a standard as to whether a child is well instructed in his religion. However, I may safely say that our Catholic children are better instructed in religion than the children attending State schools, and better informed as regards the matter and substance of Holy Scripture; but as to whether they are better up in chapter and verse I am not able to state.

628. In other branches are they quite up to the current standard?—Quite so, I believe. I have assisted personally at the examinations at these schools, and I have been very greatly astonished with the results. I think they compare very favourably indeed with the schools in England. I have not assisted at any of the Government school examinations; but, from what I have heard, I am inclined to think that the secular instruction in Catholic schools is quite up to the standard of the Government schools, if not above it.

629. Do you find that any of the boys stand for honours in the New Zealand University; if so, with what success?—Not many. As to the success, I may mention that one boy in the Onehunga school was first in the class. But, to be candid, our boys' schools are much weaker than the girls' schools. It is only now that I have taken steps to procure more efficient masters that I hope we shall be able to do a great deal more for our boys' schools. At Onehunga and the Thames, however, the schools are efficient; but those in Auckland I do not feel proud of.

630. Then, your Church is not opposed to the boys going in for University honours?—Certainly not.

631. Have you any objection to Roman Catholic schools being under Government inspection?—On the contrary, I advocate Government inspection; it promotes a healthy competition.

632. Who performs the inspection of Catholic schools, and to whom do they report?—There are annual examinations at the schools, which are conducted before the public, and at which the clergy always assist. I assist myself, and therefore I am able to form a judgment of the results from what I see. In the case of other reports, which do not come under my own personal experience, the reports of the examinations reach me at least indirectly, if not in a formal manner.

633. From what source do you receive your school-teachers, and what standard of efficiency do you expect before appointing them?—The principal source from which we get our school-teachers in Auckland is from the Sisters of Mercy—ladies who specially dedicate their lives to the work of education; and, as I have said, I am on the point of procuring the services of some teaching Brothers, who make it the object of their lives to educate the young. I have not had occasion yet to accept the services of lay teachers.

634. Do you find any teachers in the State schools of the Roman Catholic faith?—I believe that there are some, but it is not a matter which comes under my knowledge in any particular way.

635. Do you approve of the secular system of State education; if so, state your reasons?—In answer to the first part of the question, I have a most decided objection to it. My reasons I might expatiate upon at very great length. Education affects the whole man, his moral and intellectual being, and the secular system omits entirely the moral training, which, after all, is the most necessary element to enable a man to go through life as he ought.

636. Then, you are not opposed to the reading of the Bible in State schools?—I am most pleased that it should be read in the schools under a conscience-clause, and for the denominational religious instruction of such as make the Scriptures their text-book, but not for Catholic children, whose religion is taught them in their catechism.

637. Are you opposed to the Bible being read by laymen?—Do you mean by laymen in schools or laymen generally.

638. Laymen in schools?—There is no objection to laymen reading the Holy Scriptures for their own benefit, but if by reading the Holy Scriptures you mean imparting religious instruction, we always require that the person who imparts it should be competent for the purpose; and, as a rule, laymen are not competent to undertake this duty without the concurrence of the priest.

639. Do you consider that secular education has a tendency to infidelity and crime?—Alas! it has a very decided tendency that way, and that is the reason why the Catholic clergy make such a decided stand against it. We need not go far—or rather we need go far, because we are at the antipodes—to see the results of secular education in Europe.

640. Then, you do not believe that the religious instruction of children should be left to parents solely?—Certainly not, because the parents are not constituted teachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

641. And do you think that among the working-classes the parents have the necessary time?—Not only very frequently they have not the time, but very frequently also they are not models of Christian virtue.

642. Then, do you approve of denominational education; if so, on what grounds?—Certainly I do, on the grounds that it is the only fair system. If the State wishes to encourage the secular instruction of its citizens it has certainly a right and a duty to respect their conscientious convictions, and, as there is no other system in which that is capable of being done, the denominational system has undoubtedly my earnest and best wishes.

643. Is there any attempt made to influence the religious opinions of other denominations in the Catholic schools, and have you known of any converts having been made to the Roman Catholic faith?—There is no effort made whatever to induce the Protestants to attend our schools. They are never expected to come, nor do they come, to the religious instruction. I have never known of any Protestant child becoming a Catholic, but there are instances where, in after life, they have joined the Church.