

727. If the State paid the teacher and the teacher taught the catechism, would not that be State aid to the Church?—Certainly not directly; it might be indirectly.

728. Very well. Are all these religions which “the sun shines on,” as far as the Queen is concerned, equally true?—Certainly not.

729. Would not the State, then, be giving its money to the propagation of error in certain cases?—That is a Catholic view, but it is not a Protestant view.

730. I only want to get at the facts?—The State has no conscience whatever; it is very elastic, and whether we are Jews, Protestants, Catholics, Mohammedans, it does not matter one bit to the State.

731. Would it be wise for the State to give its money to the propagation of error?—That is a question I need not go into. Practically, here we are in New Zealand with a Christian Government, which maintains that Christianity ought to be taught, and yet, as a matter of fact, Christianity is excluded and therefore it is the duty of all Christians, including Catholics, to raise their voice against such a system.

732. The teaching of the Church, I suppose, has always been in the same direction?—It insists upon its followers being taught their religion, and pursuing the end for which they were created.

733. You are quite willing, then, to have the denominational books, and you are agreeable to the State imparting secular education and appointing a secular inspector?—Yes; although in the matter of denominational books we do not want any dictation either. Religion is so subtle that it pervades nearly every book; many books which profess to be purely secular are most positively irreligious. We should be sorry to see the works of Voltaire put as a class-book for our children.

734. I think I have seen some historical books used which are written in a way that would be calculated to set people together by the ears?—If so, such books ought not to be encouraged. I am afraid that books of that sort have been in universal circulation in the State schools as against the Roman Catholics and their religion. I do not wish to say that to offend any one. But, as a matter of fact, it is not fair that books should be put into the hands of children which, instead of informing them, actually misinform them and give them false impressions. Therefore, the selection of the books to be used in the schools should be intrusted to the management of the school.

735. Is it not possible that in certain cases, under such a system, absolute sedition might be taught?—If so, let it be repressed.

736. Would not the most effectual method of repressing it be to allow the State to have the charge of education altogether?—Certainly not; because you suppose an exceptional or individual abuse of a good thing. It does not follow that, because one man is a murderer or traitor, therefore the whole body are to be treated as murderers and seditious people. I do not know that there has been such a case, but, suppose some seditious book had been put into the hands of children, does it follow that the State should step in and say, “We will have the whole thing under our own sole management for the future?”

737. I think you said that education in the Province of Auckland had got a little off the rails through the absence of the Bishop?—Yes; and I consider it to be a little off the rails at the present moment.

738. Was it not while the Bishop was there that it went off the rails?—I know what you are driving at, Mr. Swanson, and, although I am not in a position to defend my predecessor, I am given to understand that there has been mismanagement which I am not called upon to defend.

739. I am merely referring to the schools now?—I presume you are coming to the North Shore.

740. No, not at all. Do not think that. I never mentioned the North Shore, and I would not do so at all. That is, in fact, going outside the question. I think the affair you hint at was due to the man in charge, not to the Bishop. I have very good means of knowing that. But, at this particular time, of which you are speaking, I hope you will admit that it was high time the State took charge of education in Auckland?—If you find children swarming with vermin it is quite clear to me that some interference was reasonable.

741. If the thing broke down so completely there, then, is there any guarantee that it might not break down again?—Yes.

742. What is it?—In the first place I do not admit your hypothesis that it did break down so utterly. Even if it did it is no argument against the system. Because it failed once it is no reason that it should fail a second time.

743. The State system, I think, has not failed?—With due deference it is certainly not an unqualified success, and if it is not an unqualified success it is a partial failure.

744. We will say that it is a partial failure, though I do not see it. The other system was a total failure?—There we differ too.

745. Will you point out any instance of an exception?—I am in ignorance of the place in a great measure. I hold, however, that if a citizen is brought up with a knowledge of the necessity of leading a good and moral life that is something very tangible indeed, something better than mere arithmetic. And, if it had not been for the moral training given to the children at the time you allude to, I do not know where the Catholic flock, of which I am the Bishop, would be now. I have to thank God that there are many useful ornaments of society and the Church which represent the fruits of former education.

746. But I am asking you about the Province of Auckland. All the denominations were the same; my remarks did not apply exclusively to the Catholic denomination. Was it not high time for the State to step in?—Supposing it was, it does not follow that the present system is the right one. The State stepped in, as I suppose, because it wished the secular instruction of the children to be improved.

747. You say now that, whatever was the case before the Government schools, the Catholic schools are good schools?—Some of them; but with others I am not satisfied.

748. At all events they are capable of being made better?—Certainly.