

155. Do you say that the Roman Catholic children are better in these respects than the children of the State schools?—To answer that question would lead me into a theological discussion. I do not think that things are quite equal in the matter.

156. You would not deny that the teaching there is of a Christian character?—It is strictly Christian, as Christianity is received by the Roman Catholic Church; but it does not follow necessarily that it is of a Bible character.

157. But it must be of a religious character in any case?—It is religious.

158. You would not like to say that they were any better than the children of our State schools?—No, I should not like to say so. In fact, to go by statistics, I am afraid it is the other way.

159. But, putting aside any difference of creed, you must admit that it is Christian teaching?—It is religious teaching, as distinct from Biblical. I do not think that moral and religious teaching need necessarily be Biblical; but I should prefer to see the Bible in the schools.

160. How would you get on with the system you propose if there is to be no interpretation, but only reading the Bible?—From what I said just now you will understand that I believe God to be capable of moving the minds and hearts of the children through the influence of His own word.

161. How does that apply to the Catholic schools?—The Bible, so far as I know, is not used in the Catholic schools.

162. *Mr. Collins.*] You have stated that under our present system we are educating only one side, by which I take it that you mean that we are teaching the intellectual side only?—Specially the intellectual; not the religious or spiritual side.

163. Are you acquainted with the nature of the reading-books used in our schools, and, if so, would you not consider that a great portion of them are distinctly in the direction of educating in both religious and moral truths?—I believe that morality is taught in those books.

164. Would you not find that some of these lessons are distinctly on Biblical subjects, and that they are taught by the teachers in a manner that is perfectly understood by the children; if so, would you not consider that these lessons now given do in themselves teach morality and religion?—To some extent.

165. You say that it is on the score of good citizenship that it is necessary that this change should be made. Do you consider that the children of New Zealand compare unfavourably with other countries where religious education is given?—I cannot say.

166. Do you know by statistical information?—No, I have no statistical information on the subject.

167. Do you know that it can be proved by statistics that our children are better than the children of those countries where religious instruction is given?—I can quite believe that. We are living under more favourable conditions in New Zealand.

168. Do you know Queensland at all?—I do not know what the statistics are with regard to Queensland.

169. If I state that, statistically, it can be shown that our children are less criminal than those of countries where religious instruction is given in the schools, would you say that is outside of the education question?—Yes.

170. Would you say you attribute that to New Zealand people as a whole being a church-going people, and, in connection with that, a certain influence is brought to bear on our young people?—A large majority of our children are going to our Sunday-schools; in that way the majority are having some religious instruction given to them, and the result has been very marked.

171. When you said it was impossible to look at the children of the colony without seeing the necessity for some such change as this which is now proposed, did you intend to convey the impression that there was something wrong or exceptional?—Not exceptional. I have said again and again that I did not think they were worse than the children of other places; but that I believed they could be made very much better.

172. I am trying to compare the conditions where the religious instruction you ask for is given with the conditions here, where the instruction is entirely secular. I want to show that you are asking us to alter our system, which shows better results than that in other places where religious instruction is given in the State schools?—I think I said that in New Zealand there are exceptionally favourable conditions of life as compared with places where the circumstances of the population have a tendency to produce a larger amount of crime than we have here.

173. Do you think that the introduction of this text-book into our schools will satisfy the Jews resident in the colony?—I do not know that it ought to dissatisfy them, inasmuch as the conscience clause will be a safeguard for them.

174. Do you think it will satisfy the Roman Catholics?—I do not know that it will satisfy them; but they will not be in a worse condition than they are.

175. Do you think that will satisfy the rationalistic laity?—I do not think so.

176. Here we have three sections of the community who are dissatisfied with this proposed change?—They are about 20 per cent. of the whole population.

177. They would have to take advantage of the conscience clause?—Yes.

178. Will not this destroy our national system of education?—I do not think so. After looking at the whole subject I am of opinion that if we wish to preserve our "national" system of education we shall have to resort to some such change as this; I believe this is the feeling of the people.

179. Do you think it would be wise to order it in such a way that a large number of the community will have to take advantage of the conscience clause?—Yes; if by so doing the far greater number will be advantaged. If we are better in respect to criminal statistics, the question of crime is not the only thing that presses for consideration.

180. *Mr. McNab.*] You take your stand on this: that the Bible is the inspired word of God, and ought to be read to the children?—Yes.