

gious instruction stand highest in juvenile crime?—It may be that connected with these Churches there are a great many nominal adherents who are non-church-goers. The children sent to the Industrial Schools are mostly the children of parents who do not go to any church. I think you will find that the criminal class do not come from church-going people; some may, but not anything like the number of children belonging to non-church-going people.

234. Do you think that parents who belong to the Church of England and Roman Catholic Church are less careful in bringing up their children than the parents of other denominations?—I am not aware that they are.

235. Our system of education has been characterized as “godless,” “atheistic,” “communist,” “infidel.” Is that your opinion?—Not at all. If there is one of these terms that could be used, such as “godless,”—I have never used the term myself,—the meaning of those who use it, I presume, is that God’s Word is excluded from the school. I do not think that in any other sense it could be used.

236. Are you aware what effect the Irish National Scripture Lesson-book has had where it has been introduced into a national system of education; has the national system in such places been maintained in its entirety, or has it been broken up?—So far as I am aware it has been maintained.

237. Have you any experience of the working of the Irish National Scripture Lesson-book?—I have no experience.

238. Are you aware that it was discarded by the Commissioners of National Education and sent to New South Wales?—I am not aware of that, or that the Commissioners of the National Schools sent it to New South Wales.

239. I only put the question to you to ascertain your knowledge?—I do not think they sent it to New South Wales; I think the Education Department of that colony adopted it.

240. What effect has the book had on the Irish national system of education; has that system been maintained in its entirety, or has this book been the means of destroying the national character of the system in Ireland?—I am aware that system broke down for a time; probably the state of Ireland is somewhat peculiar and cannot be compared with other countries.

241. So that, in your opinion, every place that tried to get this book introduced into their schools is no test of the usefulness of it if introduced into the schools of the colony?—Not so; but in Ireland the representatives of one special Church were under outside influence: they were compelled to withdraw the book.

242. *Mr. Collins.*] I will draw your attention to page 5 of the Royal Reader, where you will find the following references: “The Song of Miriam,” “The Destruction of Sennacherib’s Army,” “The Nativity,” “Psalm of Life,” “Law written by the finger of God on the heart of man,”—there are illustrations of Biblical passages. Do you think it is fair to apply the term “godless” to a system which embraces such teaching as that?—I have said that I never used the term “godless” myself. I think those who use the term simply use it with this meaning—namely, that God’s Word is not read in the schools; you must admit that those poems are not extracts from the Bible.

243. But they are on Bible subjects?—Yes.

244. Do you think it is fair, with these passages strewn up and down through the book, do you think it is fair to stigmatize our system as a “godless” system?—I am not myself prepared to use that phrase.

245. Then, do you think that the Irish National Scripture Lesson-book will be a solution of the difficulty?—I believe it will.

246. Would you be surprised to hear that we have evidence of the highest authority to the contrary, that gentlemen of great experience have expressed the opinion that it is to be regarded as rather the thin end of the wedge towards denominationalism?—I should be surprised, inasmuch as a leader of the Anglican Church in this diocese admitted to me that it would prevent the denominational system.

247. Do you think it is a good thing that parents of children belonging to denominational Churches should be able to meet together in regard to the education of their children on a common platform, irrespective of religious differences?—I certainly think so.

248. Do you think that anything that would tend to break up the present system of education would be a good thing?—I do not think it would.

249. Suppose a number of schools would have to take advantage of the conscience clause, would not that emphasize these differences?—It might; but I do not think it would break up the harmony which exists among the children themselves.

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Rev. JAMES PATERSON, in attendance and examined.

250. *The Chairman.*] The Committee have decided that, as this is an important national question, the evidence given before the Committee should be printed for the use of the members of the House of Representatives, hence I have invited you to come this morning so that your evidence should be taken down in shorthand. We will be pleased to hear any statement you have to make. Is the Committee to understand that you represent the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand?—Yes.

251. You are voicing the views of your Church on this question of religious instruction in the State schools?—Quite so. I think I should read the resolution that was passed by the General Assembly of our Church. It is in the printed documents before you. I regret that I forgot to bring with me the minutes of proceedings of our Assembly. I have here a minute of our General Assembly held in 1894. It is as follows: “Receive the report, and thank the Committee for their diligence, and especially the convener. Express the gratification of the Assembly at the increased interest and activity shown in the community generally on the subject of religious education in our