

is their religious persuasion. At the same time the fact remains that they are not necessarily ardent religious teachers, as their calling is not that of religious teachers, but of intellectual instructors. In small schools I think the tendency would be almost immediately for the Committee to look out for teachers of their own persuasion, and I think that in large schools the differences of opinion of those in the neighbourhood whose children attend would render it impossible for the master to please the community. I might say that the religious element in the schools has, on the whole, had the effect in the past of retarding educational development. On looking back into the history of the past, I am persuaded that the religious element in educational institutions has had the effect of hindering progress in scientific directions, in which at present our system is in advance of that of bygone times.

143. Is that all?—I think I have nothing more to say.

144. *Mr. Willis.*] I would like to ask whether you think the time taken up in the reading of this book is likely to interfere with the other subjects, or be a loss in any other way?—That, in itself, is a small matter, but it is a detail which is not in any way provided for by those who are moving in this matter. They do not tell how much time for teaching they ask for.

145. Half an hour each morning in the week?—I do not think I should make a serious point of the time taken up, however ill-spaced. The teachers already complain of the burden of the syllabus. This is one more straw on the camel's back.

146. Do you think it would be prejudicial to the Catholic teachers?—I think I have already touched on that point. Indirectly I think it would. The religious feeling outside now is almost as strong as in the past; there is a feeling of intolerance—a Roman Catholic committee would want a Roman Catholic teacher, and a Wesleyan committee a Wesleyan.

147. There is a statement made by a Bishop in reply to a question, that he considers the children of the Roman Catholic schools, in consequence of religious teaching, were more moral than the children of other denominations. I will put the question to you in this way: Do you consider the children of the Roman Catholic schools, in consequence of better instruction, are of better morals than the others?—I have no evidence whatever; I do not think so; but then you know—I am not supposed to give a reason—it might be contended that the Roman Catholics have a lower class of children to deal with. There is no doubt of that. I do not make any comparison; but I do not think a tittle of evidence can be brought to show that they are a whit better.

148. *Mr. Collins.*] Mr. Lee has so completely covered the whole ground that he has left very little for me to elucidate. Do you consider it an advantage to have children of different denominations educated on one common ground? I mean the children of parents who follow the one common denomination. Do you think it will be likely to prove of moral and intellectual advantage?—I do not see it, one way or another. I do not know about the different religious persuasions. I do not suppose there is much religious talking in the playgrounds.

149. The absence of religion from the schools now, it appears to me, means that all children, of whatever religious views, can be trained up on one common ground. I want to get your opinion on this matter. Do you not think it will inculcate a general respect and feeling?—I should certainly say it would inculcate tolerance.

150. It has been asserted that the conscience clause did not enable those who wished to absent themselves from that particular lesson: do you not think a conscience clause could be introduced in that Bill which would become workable?—One of the effects of a conscience clause is that those who withdraw are pointed at by the others.

151. You know that is the case?—Yes. There is one more thing I should like to say. It might be inferred from what I say that I am opposed to religious instruction. I am not opposed to religious instruction. I will explain myself by saying this: Such a thing as this might be done: Let the State allow Wednesday afternoon in the week—it is a thought of my own, and you can take it for what it is worth—let one day in the week be taken in which religious instruction can be given anywhere, and the attendance so put in by the children count as attendance. The children not attending the religious instruction should attend the ordinary school. The curriculum of the school for that afternoon should not be in standard subjects, whereby the children not attendant at the ordinary school would lose ground. That would be a concession to religious instruction, and with it and the Sunday-school teaching those denominations who want religious instruction would be able to have such religious instruction of their own.

152. Do you think the children of the schools here are less respectful or less obedient than the children of other countries?—No, I do not; there may be some appearance of it, and I think the appearance may be accounted for. It is continually pointed out that we have a certain amount of larrikinism, and so on. I think that the freedom and want of veneration that we have in our colonies is due to two causes—namely, the great liberty and independence enjoyed by everybody in the colony, and the absence in our towns and communities of means of rational enjoyment. I am going now on ground that is a little beside the mark, perhaps; but I am a strong advocate for some system whereby our youth of the colony should have their amusements catered for.

153. Rational recreation?—Yes; if we had such provided, larrikinism would disappear. Funds should be found for this object.

154. From your opening remarks I judge that you are under the impression that even the introduction of these text-books would mean the disintegration of our State-school system?—Yes; that is a point.

155. *Mr. Lang.*] It has been said there is a great want of reverence on the part of our young people attending our public schools. Supposing that is so, do you think the reading of these text-books in schools would make a difference in the behaviour of the children?—I do not think so. I have said that the perfunctory reading of this book without note or comment would have very little effect indeed.

156. *Mr. McNab.*] Shortly stated, your position is this: that mere reading is of no use, and if