

44. *Mr. McNab.*] Do many of the children of your denomination who attend the State schools become teachers? Some of them do intend to become teachers.

45. So that if anything which would destroy the secular character of the schools were introduced your children would be withdrawn?—Yes, most decidedly.

46. Do you think this lesson-book would have that effect?—I do not know whether this lesson-book will have that effect, for you must be aware that in many schools where it has been used it has been withdrawn or modified; it is too insipid altogether.

47. Do you say it will have no effect, or that it will reintroduce denominationalism?—Yes; either it will have no effect or it will bring back denominationalism.

48. *Mr. Collins.*] Do you think that this agitation originated with the people or with the clergy?—With the clergy, and only a few of them.

49. Do you think this would be regarded as a satisfactory solution of the religious difficulty?—Certainly not.

50. Would it be the thin end of the wedge to get in denominationalism?—That is all.

51. You say if they introduce this book, the Jews, who do not care much about it one way or other, will withdraw their children and agitate for a grant for their own denominational schools?—Most decidedly.

52. And other bodies, in your opinion, will do the same thing?—Most decidedly; it will be but right.

53. Would it strengthen the Roman Catholic claim for State aid?—Certainly it would.

54. You think they would have conscientious grounds to go upon?—They would have a right. Only yesterday, in my capacity of Chairman of the Benevolent Institution of this city, a child named Dillon was claimed by the Sisters of Mercy as not being able to receive a Catholic education under the care of the Institution. I had to intrust the child to the care of a very respectable person who took the greatest care of the child; she brought the child in and it looked in splendid health; but they set up their denominational right.

55. Do you think it would be wise or proper to add to the school syllabus of a national character any item that would compel a number of people to absent themselves from that particular school?—You must know that would not conduce to the benefit of the school; it would be quite the reverse; no doubt many would absent themselves if any text-book or lesson-book were introduced which they did not believe in.

56. Have you read the present school readers?—I have, many of them.

57. Do you think they are open to the charge of being "godless"?—That is entirely false. I can hardly express the disgust I felt when I read that lying statement.

58. *Mr. Fraser.*] Do I understand you that your objection to the introduction of this book does not apply to this book alone, but to any conceivable book that would impart religious instruction in the schools?—My objection is to the introduction of religion into the school syllabus.

59. If there were a general agreement to allow religious instruction to be the work of those having authority to impart it?—I object to the introduction of religious education into the schools.

60. Do you not think it would be possible to compile a work that would embody the agreement of the various sects? Do you think that could be done?—There is only one man I know who would attempt it—one man who believes in himself (*Mr. Coleman Phillips*)—he has compiled a book which he entitled "A Book for the Church of God in New Zealand."

61. *The Chairman.*] You say you are Chairman of the Committee of one of the city schools?—Yes.

62. Has your Committee, to your knowledge, been approached by any clergymen residing in the City of Wellington with the view of giving religious instruction under the present Act?—You know that all Committeemen have been buttonholed more or less by clergymen?

63. You do not understand my question?—I do. You must know that all members of Committees have been buttonholed by the various clergymen who desire to introduce this pernicious system.

64. What I want to know is whether your Committee has been approached in reference to a clergyman attending your school to give religious instruction under the "present Act" before or after school-hours?—Never. I consider there is quite enough elasticity under the present Act to impart religious instruction in the schools if required.

65. You have stated in your evidence that you consulted the teaching staff of your school, and obtained an opinion from them as to the introduction of this book into the school?—Yes.

66. Did they express any opinion for or against it?—Against it—very much against it.

67. What does your Committee think?—They hold the same opinion, and they sent me to the Hon. Mr. Reeves to be their mouthpiece.

Mr. W. T. GRUNDY examined.

68. *The Chairman.*] We understand that you are the Headmaster of Clyde Quay State School?—Yes.

69. And you are Secretary to the New Zealand Educational Institute?—Yes.

70. The Committee will have much pleasure in hearing you make a statement in reference to the question of the introduction of the Irish National Scripture Lesson-book into the State schools of this colony. I would ask you, before you begin to make your statement, what is the number of scholars attending your school?—800.

We will now hear your statement.

*Mr. Grundy:* The first point I would like to emphasize is this: that it appears from the teacher's point of view that the introduction of this book into the schools will be the first step towards the commencement of denominational education. I will, if the Committee will allow me,