

to leave, by however indirect a manner, upon the mind of the child the idea that religion is a matter only for the home and the church, or that it is a matter of secondary importance to arithmetic as a preparation for life, or that sufficient codes of personal conduct can be formed apart from the inspiration and the sustaining power of religion. I do not ask the members of this Commission to share these views of religion in education. I merely ask them to recognize the fact that these views are widely held in this Dominion. For us Catholics these teachings are as the very marrow of our lives. The case between the State school and the unaided private school is, in its last resort, a case of dogma against dogma. The fairest and most statesmanlike way is for the State to recognize in a proper and practical way that there are other views of religion in education besides those for which our present Act provides. We ask only for equal treatment of consciences in education. I know that this would present certain difficulties; but the difficulties are superficial; New Zealand statemanship has met and conquered greater; and Canada, Germany, Belgium, Scandinavia, and many other lands show that, given good-will, we also may arrive at a just settlement of this radical defect in our education system.

HERBERT ALBERT EDWARD MILNES examined on oath. (No. 10.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Will you state your qualifications, and the points you desire to bring before the Commission?—I am a Bachelor of Science of London University, and Principal of the Auckland Training College. Before entering upon the question of the training of teachers, I should like to say, as a taxpayer, that I came from England six years ago, and I have now lived in New Zealand long enough to understand its system of education, and I say emphatically that I think the public are getting their money's worth, particularly in regard to primary education. I think the primary education given in this country compares very favourably indeed with what I have been accustomed to at Home. I should not like to say anything which would give a wrong impression, but I do not think there is very much to find fault with. I think, as a taxpayer, apart from my position as a teacher, that things are very satisfactory indeed. The only thing upon which education experts agree is to disagree. One finds all variety of views. One man holds that Latin is absolutely essential to education; another is equally emphatic that Latin is waste of time. But there is one thing that all agree upon, and that is that the teacher is the pivot of the system. If you can get capable teachers—men of good character, and exercising good influence over the scholars—your syllabus can take a very secondary position. Get good teachers, and the rest can almost be left alone. There have been all sorts of systems in England. Most of them are forgotten, but we remember men like Arnold and Thring. Here in Auckland I was struck by the fact that there was once a master, Mr. Worthington, at the school in Wellesley Street. He was evidently a man of character, and he left his mark on the city in many ways. That only emphasizes the fact that after all it is the teacher that matters. That being so, is it not important that we should see in training our teachers that the students have the best models placed before them? The Auckland Normal School is a school of about 450 or 500 scholars, and it exists for the purpose of enabling the students at the Training College to get practice in teaching. That being so, is it not necessary that every teacher in the school should be a picked teacher to act as a model to the students—the best teacher you can get in the province? Have we the best teachers in the Auckland Normal School? I do not wish to say anything derogatory to the teachers who are now in the Normal School, but any one who knows the position will agree that there are many good teachers in the province who are not in the Normal School. Why not? Because they find the salaries offered too small. For instance, in the scheme for salaries the teachers in the Normal School receive from £90 to £420 a year. The veriest tyro who begins as a teacher in a backblocks school can get £90 a year without any qualifications whatever. Yet we are supposed to place before the students teachers at £90 a year, who are to be models to those students in their practical work. Similarly, there are teachers receiving £120 and £130 a year. There, again, although I have no fault to find with the salaries for ordinary purposes, I say that to give these salaries to teachers who are to act as models to the students seems to me unwise. You are expecting too much from the teachers for the money. It is like spoiling a suit of clothes for the sake of a few buttons. If means could be found to provide a little extra remuneration to the members of the lower grades of the staff the system would be vastly improved. The next question is whether one normal school is big enough to provide training for 160 students. The colleges, according to the regulations, may hold 100. Our school has, roughly, from 450 to 500 scholars to provide 100 students with the means of practical training—that is to say, one student has five scholars to deal with. That seems to me insufficient. I think it would be far better if, at any rate, one more normal school were established. Or would it not be better still to formally recognize what I might term the Auckland system? The Auckland Board adopted a scheme of this sort: the Chief Inspector recommended the names of picked teachers in the city schools. These were all seen at work and approved by the Principal of the Training College, and they were asked if they would be willing to allow one or two students to observe them at work. The assistant teachers who were asked and the headmasters of their schools very kindly agreed to do that without any remuneration, and it is greatly to their credit that for the last two years those teachers have been willing to take in each case two of our students and have them in their class-rooms, allowing them to watch the work, and exercising supervision over them. It seems to me that that is an excellent scheme. It is in practical working-order, and I may say that Mr. Wells, who is a member of the Commission, is headmaster of one of the schools in which it is in operation. If a little money could be provided for the remuneration of these assistant teachers it would put the matter on a proper basis, and more could be expected from them than is expected now. It would not involve much more expense, and it would mean much better provision for the training of teachers