

Daily Times, May 2, 1903.) On Friday night Dean Fitchett said the teachers were granted a conscience clause in 1903 because they were "asked to teach religion." In other words, he contends that "literary, historical, and ethical explanations" of simple Bible lessons were "religion" in 1903; and he contends just as strenuously that they are not religion in 1913. A versatile genius, truly!

'Dean Fitchett's whole attitude towards the teachers can only be described as little less than truculent. "When the teachers . . . realised that it never belonged to the teachers to say what should be taught in the schools, they would take another view of the position." "If the teachers would not accept that (the speaker's) challenge, let them hold their peace"—this challenge being, by the way, an entirely useless exhibition of generosity on the part of the League, for the simple reason that even if the two teachers came back with the most glowing report of the working of the system in Australia the report would have little applicability to New Zealand. Here teachers are appointed, not by a central authority, but by local school committees; and that, for the teachers, makes all the difference. Finally, asked what would be the consequence if a teacher persistently refused, on conscientious grounds, to give the Bible lessons, the answer was: "I think the consequences would be serious." No doubt teachers will have made a note of these conciliatory utterances, as furnishing interesting illustrations of the way in which the League "trusts the teachers."

'Dean Fitchett dwells with pathetic iteration—clinging to it as his one plank out of ship-wreck—on the obviously ridiculous pretence that Scripture lessons, given to the children as portion of the inspired Word of God, are not religious teaching. I will not, for the present, burden your columns with quotations from the League leaflet, compiled last year by the Rev. Alex. Don before the new theory was in vogue, which utterly and finally disproves Dean Fitchett's contention. Some of these quotations I have already given your readers; and not a solitary League representative has attempted to face the deadly evidence which this leaflet supplies as to the definitely religious character of the lessons as they are being given. In the very preface of the New South Wales text-book it is expressly set forth that the books have been compiled on a method "calculated to fix much of moral and religious instruction on the heart." To say that a teacher who imparts, "as intelligently as any other lesson," the lessons in the Queensland manual on "The True Vine" (p. 115), "The Last Supper" (p. 116), "Gethsemane" (p. 118), "The Crucifixion" (p. 123), "The Resurrection" (p. 126), etc., is only teaching "morals," is to trifle with the intelligence of thinking people.

'To sum up: The cardinal objections to the League's scheme—that it is unfair to conscientiously objecting teachers, that it places teachers in a position to be discriminated against because of their religious beliefs, that it is unjust to dissident taxpayers, that it hands over to the State a function which belongs rightly to parents and the Church, and that it involves the settlement of questions of religion and conscience by the unjust and tyrannical method of a mere count of heads—remain unrefuted. If Dean Fitchett has failed, as he manifestly has done, to successfully reply to them, it may fairly be inferred that it is because they are intrinsically unanswerable.—I am, etc.,

J. A. SCOTT.

'June 14.'

Press Comment on the Lecture

In a leading article in its Saturday's issue the *Evening Star* commented in part as follows on the 'reply to Bishop Cleary': 'When the Very Rev. Dean Fitchett undertook on behalf of the Bible in State Schools League "to expose and refute the fallacies of their opponents" (see advertisement), he accepted a task

beyond his mental and physical powers. It was a brave and plucky thing to do: it was magnificent, but it was not war. The Dean could not be heard, save occasionally, more than halfway down the crowded hall; he was too obviously tired after an address lasting an hour and a quarter; and he certainly did not convince one-half of his audience with the wisdom of his policy. We are where we were. Teachers in the public schools and journalists who approach this subject free from sectarian bias have no need to review their position or to recast their conclusions as a result of anything that the Dean said last night, whether sarcastically, wittily, or eulogistically.'

Diocesan News

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

(From our own correspondent.)

June 14.

The Education Board's inspectors have been engaged during the past week in examining the Catholic schools of the city.

His Grace Archbishop Redwood will administer the Sacrament of Confirmation in St. Anne's Church on Sunday, July 20.

Rev. Father James Tymons, S.M., who recently returned from a visit to the Old Country, is at present stationed at Dannevirke.

The annual social of the Wellington district H.A.C.B. Society Council will take place at St. Peter's Schoolroom on Wednesday, August 20.

The Catholic Club entertained the Catholic men of the H.M.S. New Zealand at the club rooms last Thursday evening, and a most enjoyable evening was spent.

The committee set up to make arrangements to mark the elevation of his Grace Archbishop O'Shea met last Wednesday evening and appointed various sub-committees to carry out the necessary arrangements.

The London correspondent of the *Dominion* chronicles the following:—The Rev. H. F. Holbrook, of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Auckland, was in London last week, and now is in Wexford. He intends to remain in Europe until next January.

Messrs. J. W. Callaghan and R. P. Flanagan represented the Wellington Hibernians in the deputation that waited upon the Hon. F. M. B. Fisher, Minister in Charge of the Friendly Societies, in connection with the subvention scheme, proposed to be legislated regarding Friendly Society finance.

Mr. P. G. McEvedy, an old boy of St. Patrick's College, who is a student at Guy's Hospital, London, came equal first in the 1912-13 junior examinations for general proficiency. He was awarded a certificate for anatomy and secured a scholarship of £45 in physiology. Mr. McEvedy, who is a brother of Dr. McEvedy, of Wellington, entered Guy's Hospital last year by winning a £160 scholarship.

At the reception given to Miss Proctor, the astronomer, the Very Rev. Dr. Kennedy, S.M., of St. Patrick's College, who was present, added his congratulations to Miss Proctor on the success of her mission. He also spoke of the suitability of Nelson as a site for a solar observatory. Chiefly its qualifications were the amount of bright sunshine—about 60 per cent. of the possible amount—and the stillness of the atmosphere.

Rev. J. P. Bartley, O.F.M., leaves by the Maunganui for Sydney on Friday next, June 20. He is proceeding to Melbourne to receive ordination at the hands of the Most Rev. Dr. Mannix on Sunday, June 29. He will be accompanied by his brother, Rev. F. S. Bartley, S.M., M.A., of St. Patrick's College. Another brother, Rev. G. J. Bartley, who is a priest in the archdiocese of Melbourne, will likewise be present at the ceremony.

The usual fortnightly meeting of St. Mary's branch No. 3, of the Hibernian Society was held in St. Patrick's Hall on Monday evening. There was a