

showed that New South Wales, which relied on the State to do the work of religious instruction, has a much less creditable record than Victoria, where the Churches and the parents themselves shouldered their proper responsibilities in the matter. First, as to positive results. Victoria has a much higher standard of church attendance, of Sunday school attendance, and of Sabbath observance, and has about double the missionary activity of New South Wales. Victoria, with a population of about 200,000 less than that of New South Wales, has 430 more Sunday schools, 6500 more Sunday school teachers, and 63,000 more Sunday scholars than has New South Wales. Then, as to criminal records. New South Wales shows 50 per cent. more summary convictions in Magistrates' Courts than does Victoria; drunkenness, 230 per cent. more than Victoria; Supreme Court convictions, 60 per cent. more than Victoria; divorces, under same conditions, 90 per cent. more; illegitimacy, 21 per cent. more; persons in gaol per year, 45 per cent. more than Victoria. In one year there were 2458 cases before the New South Wales juvenile courts. All these figures as to the criminal records are from the latest Year-books of the Commonwealth, averages being taken over a period of ten years. In the light of all these facts, Mr. Caughley was amply justified in asking: 'Is it the teachers who need to go to Australia and study the system, or the Dean?'

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In addition, a number of incidental points were admirably brought out by Mr. Caughley, to which the limits of space make it possible to make only the briefest reference. From first to last the speaker made it emphatically clear that the teachers did not object to the Bible or to religious instruction as such, but to the particular unjust system advocated by the League. The real enemies of the Bible, it was pointed out, were those parents who were signing the League cards by the hundred asking that the teachers should be compelled to teach the Bible and who were at the same time neglecting to have the Bible read and taught in their own homes. The absurd pretence that the teacher is not to be compelled to teach religion but only literature or history or morals, was demolished by copious quotations from the Australian Education Acts and from the various Scripture Lesson Books in use. In this connection the speaker aptly declared that, if the contention of its advocates was correct, the League's proper title should be 'The Literary, Moral, and Historical Instruction League.' The Bible, it was pointed out, was not merely a collection of printed words but the written revelation of God, and if it was administered as anything but that it was not the Bible that was being taught at all. The grave injustice inflicted on dissenting denominations by the proposed system was explained and emphasised; and the selfishness and lack of principle of the four League denominations in being ready to ride rough-shod over other religious bodies who cannot accept their scheme merely because they are, as they think, in the majority, were caustically dealt with. The unfairness of the proposal for a referendum on such a subject as religious instruction was graphically illustrated by a humorous and telling parable, which we reproduce elsewhere in this issue. Mr. Caughley also made indirect but significant reference to the effect which the adoption of the League's system would have on the position of the Catholic claims. Quoting Dean Fitchett's statement that if the Nelson system were made legal the claims of the Catholics would be irresistible because the State would have taken a side, Mr. Caughley pointed out that that was exactly what the State did under the Australian system. It took a side. A lady had publicly stated, in trying to persuade the women of the W.C.T.U., that 'the right of entry could not be separated from the League's platform, otherwise the Catholics would have just cause to complain.' So the right of entry was thrown in as a sop to appease the Catholics. But it was a Protestant system, and could not be accepted by the Catholics. A Presbyterian minister of Christchurch, who frequently lectured in the interests of the League, had, he said, admitted to him that if the League's scheme were adopted something would have to be done for the Cath-

olics. Mr. Caughley's reply was: 'Why don't you say so and fortify your claim?' The minister replied: 'That is impossible, because the others are saying this is going to make it impossible for the Catholics to get a grant in aid.'

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Mr. Caughley excelled himself at question time, and won golden opinions from his Dunedin audience for the readiness and straightforwardness of his replies. There was no stipulation—such as is commonly insisted on at League public meetings—that all questions must be in writing. All and sundry were allowed to interrogate; and the utmost latitude was permitted both as to the manner and the matter of their questioning. Not a question was shirked, or parried, or evaded; and the speaker's terse, clear, concise, and absolutely cogent answers elicited continual applause and warm expressions of approval. Altogether, the meeting was a great success, and Mr. Caughley's address a valuable and notable contribution to the controversy on this much-debated question.

### Dean Fitchett's Reply

Dean Fitchett was allowed half an hour in which to rebut the evidence and conclusions advanced by Mr. Caughley as to the working of the League's system in New South Wales; and though he occupied the full thirty minutes it is the simple truth to say that he never once came to grips with the issues which he was called upon to face. Dean Fitchett, though remarkably hale and vigorous, is well over the allotted three score years and ten; and though there was no lack of courage and spirit in his effort there was wanting the full and detailed knowledge of the question required to successfully meet an antagonist so well-equipped as the Christchurch teacher. The Dean never got properly into his stride; and his warmest friends would probably admit that in this interesting and always courteous bout the honors were all with Mr. Caughley. After the deadly evidence adduced by that gentleman, Dean Fitchett had perforce to drop his favorite appeal to the alleged testimony of New South Wales; and was constrained to fall back upon the fact that Queensland had followed the Mother State's example in adopting the system advocated by the League—a fact which ceases to be in the least impressive when it is remembered, as we have often pointed out, that the referendum was actually carried in Queensland by 26.8 per cent. of the total possible voters on the question. The only other point advanced in the Dean's 'reply' was the fact that 112,000 signatures had been obtained by the League to the petition requesting a referendum in New Zealand. That is, as Dr. Cleary has well described it, the argument of the big stick—that is, 'it is no argument at all.' The result of this interchange between two able representatives of the opposing camps has been well expressed and indicated in the editorial comments of the *Dunedin Evening Star*. 'We believe,' says our contemporary, 'it was this journal that first suggested the desirability of a debate between a representative of the Bible-in-Schools League and Mr. Caughley. That suggestion was not accepted in its entirety, but the meeting in the Early Settlers' Hall last evening afforded at least an illustration and an indication of the probable outcome of such a debate had it been held.'

The familiar impressed legend on cheques, 'Stamp duty—one penny,' would appear, from the report of the Public Service Commissioner, to be very likely to disappear (says the *Dominion*). Approximately fourteen millions of cheque forms are impressed every year by the Government Printing Office on account of the banks. The process of sending the cheques to and from the printing office and the counting of the cheques, is one that is cumbrous and expensive. The Commissioner suggests that the Government could quite safely trust the banks to pay the duty without this laborious process, particularly as the duty on bank notes and on steamer tickets was collected without any such impressed stamp.

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