

98. Then, are you opposed to denominational education?—There is a sort of prejudice against the word denominational, and therefore it is rather difficult to say what my view is. But my impression is that the State is bound to respect the conscientious objections that the Roman Catholics have, and that I, at any rate, and many Churchmen have, on that subject; and that, being taxed with the rest of the community, we being sufficiently large bodies in many places to require schools, we ought to have payments from the Government to support such schools, just as those who believe in secularism have. I have never heard any valid argument advanced against such a system.

99. What is your opinion of the educational grievance of the Catholics as stated in the petition you have heard read?—I think their conscientious conviction is that no education is at all satisfactory for children that eliminates religion as an element of education. With this conviction I do not quite see how they can allow their children to go to schools where the whole time is occupied with secular subjects, and where they have so many lessons to prepare at home that no leisure is left for their religious instructions by parents or others.

100. What would you suggest for the removal of this alleged grievance?—I think that if the Roman Catholics or any other body have a school they ought to have exactly the same payment as other schools, provided they supplied the same amount and quality of secular education which the Government schools give, and which the Inspectors require.

101. Here is a petition from the Primate which asks for grants in aid of schools. I will read the clause: "That your petitioners are convinced that any fully satisfactory measure for education by the State should contain a provision for grants-in-aid being made to schools set on foot by any religious denomination, provided that the attendance and secular instruction in such schools shall come up to the required standards, and satisfy the Government Inspectors." Do you approve that?—I would not limit it to a matter of aid. I think a school which any religious body might establish would be entitled to quite as much as the Government give to the State schools. I think the great object should be to remove a grievance. Considering that the Government spent £288,000 on education last year, I think that amount might be reduced, and that in a short period, if voluntary efforts were called out in reference to such schools, that the burden upon the public finance would be reduced. At Home the Church of England supplies £750,000 a year to the support of its schools, which relieves the Government to that amount. I should say that a similar saving would be the case here, were our system so altered that it should not be a constant source of irritation to the Roman Catholics and a great portion of the body to which I belong.

102. There is this also in the petition of the Primate: "(2.) Your petitioners are further of opinion that the Education Act should be so amendēd that provision may be made for the communication of religious instruction in the public schools by ministers of religion, or by persons duly authorized by them, to the children belonging to their respective communions within school hours." Do you approve of that?—As far as I understand the meaning it is this: that there are parts of the country where the population is so sparse that it would be impossible to establish different schools for each body, and that therefore religious instruction should be given in the one school by the clergymen, or other person for that purpose, by the different bodies. The paragraph does not conflict with the first paragraph, but merely supplements it for such cases as these.

103. Do you consider, then, that the reading of the Bible in the day-school is imperative?—I do not think the mere reading of the Bible would answer any beneficial purpose. It certainly would not suit the Roman Catholics' views, nor mine altogether. If I were to give my opinion as a citizen I should say it was discreditable to any Government to establish schools from which the Scriptures were excluded. I think it is a national sin. But speaking in my capacity as Bishop I do not think it would at all meet the wishes of the Church. The Church could not be satisfied with the mere reading of the Scriptures—to be possibly read at random by perhaps an irreligious teacher, or to be treated in an irreverent manner. For my part I do not approve of mere Bible-reading in schools.

104. *Hon. Dr. Grace.*] I understand the system of payment by results in England to be this: that the Government pay so much for every child that attends school—no matter what school—and also pay a certain sum in compensation for the efficiency attained by a certain percentage of scholars. Would such a system meet the views of the petitioners of the Church of England here?—I think it would. I do not know that I quite understand the point as distinguished from payment for attendance.

105. The system is supposed to consist upon the operation of two principles: The first that a mild compulsion should be brought to bear upon the managers of schools to get a sufficient attendance to secure the capitation allowance. The concurrent principle is that the State should not be satisfied merely with securing the attendance, but should stimulate efficiency by giving an additional sum of money on a certain percentage of pupils reaching a certain standard?—I have not thought out the question sufficiently to give an answer.

106. I thought it probably covered what you meant, and, as it was a system in operation in England, it appeared to me, taking your evidence, that it would meet all the difficulties. It appeared to me on the surface that it would meet the difficulty of the non-interference by the State in education, that it would meet the case of non-State schools already established and to be established, and that it would be an alteration of our system, in effect, instead of a breaking-down of the machinery?—I have not sufficiently thought it out to give a distinct answer.

107. *Mr. Munro.*] Do you think it possible for the different denominations to agree upon a text-book containing religious teaching similar to what was adopted by the Irish National School Commissioners?—I do not think it would be possible.

108. *Mr. Swanson.*] I apprehend your proposal would have the effect of completely bursting up the present system. If each denomination received a certain share of the money, would it be possible to keep up a thoroughly colonial system of education under that system?—I do not see the least difficulty. There might be a little difficulty in the transition state, but I do not see the least difficulty if the same amount of secular education continued to be given to the satisfaction of a Government Inspector.