

181. That is practically your statement?—Yes.

182. Then, why do you not advocate the admission of the Bible itself, in the place of extracts from the Bible?—Personally, I have no objection to the Bible being introduced into the schools; but here, in connection with this text-book, we have arranged to our hands what will be suitable to our purpose, and we have agreed to ask for this.

183. You say it will be suitable to your purpose; do you know how many signatures were attached to the petition: have you ever seen it?—Yes; I cannot say how many signatures were attached; a large number.

184. Do you know whether the signatories ever saw any copies of this book?—I really do not know; but I think they signed the petition because they understood the lessons were to be lessons taken from the Bible.

185. They signed the petition on that ground?—Yes.

186. Do you think that some of the chapters of the Bible—take, for instance, the third chapter of Genesis—suppose boys and girls to ask the meaning of certain passages: do you think the teacher would be wise in refraining from the explanation asked?—In a case of that kind a great deal depends on the teacher. I can understand an explanation that would not be pleasant, and I can understand an explanation given to which no one would object: the teacher need not answer the question; the lesson will be read according to the regulations which are provided.

187. Do you not think the effect would be undesirable if the teacher said, “I am not allowed to explain any chapter beyond what is involved in the regulations”?—I do not think there is any necessity. I should myself be prepared to answer any questions that might be asked. I think it might be done without being offensive to any one.

188. Do you think that a teacher would be likely to bring himself into contact with parents who held particular views in regard to it?—Some people might object.

189. You admit, then, there would be some element of disagreement if it were attempted to explain it?—Our book does not provide for explanation by the teacher.

190. What portion of the daily work of the school would you suggest should be dropped to make provision for this reading-lesson?—I do not know that I am sufficiently versed in the school curriculum to answer that question. It would not be necessary that any great change should be made.

191. Now, in regard to the appointment of teachers, do you think that it would influence the School Committee in the selection of a teacher, whether the candidate had particular religious views?—I think it would of necessity, to some extent—that is, the Committee would not be likely to consider a teacher suitable whose moral character was not good; but I do not think that beyond that the Committee ought to interfere.

192. Would it not cause them to inquire what denomination he belonged to?—Not more than is done at present; I do not think so.

193. Would it cause them to inquire whether he were Protestant or Catholic?—It might do so, but I do not think that would be done any more than it is at present; it is sometimes done at present.

194. Do you think there would be additional leverage brought to bear?—There ought not to be.

195. You know that some schools have Roman Catholic teachers at present?—Yes.

196. Who give complete satisfaction?—Yes.

197. Do you think there is any want of reverence in the children of the colony attending the public schools; that the reading of this book in the schools would have a beneficial effect, and that the book will make a difference in their behaviour?—I think it would make a difference; I think we are not likely to have reverence for anything if not for God; the fact that God's Word is acknowledged and read in our schools will have a tendency to produce reverence in the minds of the scholars; if you have reverence for God you will soon get reverence for man.

198. The people signing this petition: do you think if they get this they will be satisfied; will they not require something else afterwards; do you think this is merely getting the thin end of the wedge in, so as to enable them to ask for more?—I do not think it. I know there are people in New Zealand who are very strong for denominationalism; but if this is introduced it will make denominationalism less possible than it is to-day, I feel very strongly on this point.

199. *Mr. Fraser.*] Our present system is free?—Yes, so far as money payment is concerned.

200. It is open to all Churches and sects?—Yes.

201. It is open to all, because there is nothing in the syllabus to prevent any children of all denominations going to them?—I suppose it is so; but at the same time you must know that a considerable portion of the community say there is a lack of something in the syllabus which the children who go there ought to have.

202. Is there anything that would prevent parents—parents of any denomination—sending their children to the schools as they are now?—Nothing that I know of.

203. If any text-book that would be objectionable is introduced, would the schools be as free as they are now?—They would, according to the present Bill, inasmuch as there is a conscience clause; you cannot do without a conscience clause.

204. Would the introduction of Bible-reading into the school syllabus, or of any text-book that was objected to by one or more sections of the community, leave the schools as open as they are at present?—Not if you make no reference to the conscience clause.

205. Are you not aware that in regard to the conscience clause great objections are raised to it, as causing invidious distinctions?—It may make such distinction, but not of necessity.

206. You do not know?—Not of necessity.

207. You have not heard?—No; I have not heard.

208. You admitted, in answer to Mr. McNab, that it might be advisable, occasionally, for the