

FRIDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 1895.

Examination of Major-General SCHAW continued.

1. *Mr. Willis.*] Do you think that the proposed system by means of the Irish National Scripture Lesson-book will give entire satisfaction to the different denominations?—No; I do not suppose it will. There will always be some people who will be dissatisfied whatever you do; but it will give entire satisfaction to the great majority of members of the Church of England, and of the Presbyterian, Wesleyan, and other Protestant bodies; and to a considerable number of Roman Catholics also.

2. Have you any special reason for saying that?—Yes; because many of the Roman Catholics have signed the petition. I should like to answer your question put to me at our last meeting a little more precisely. The question was as to the reason for making this demand now. I might say that a fresh start has been given to the movement by the knowledge that so large a majority of the people are in favour of it, and that the principal Churches are agreed on a common platform: this has put fresh life into the movement.

3. Not because you think they are going backwards on moral grounds?—I believe it has always been demanded, for it has been before Parliament during many years previously. But these were isolated efforts. The position of the question now is very different; there is union now; there was disunion before.

4. *Mr. Collins.*] Your remarks suggest your reasons why the educational system should be altered; you draw illustrations from the effect of a purely secular education as described by the Head of Police in Paris: Have you any knowledge of the state of education in France, and the relative amount of crime since that system has been enforced, as compared with the years previous to its being in force?—I have no statistics; I have merely the statement of the Head of the Police that crime had greatly increased.

5. If you had the statistics showing that crime had decreased, would you be surprised?—Yes, I should. I go by the statement of the Head of the Police; and no one can be in a better position to judge than he is.

6. I can only say that it has decreased?—And I speak from the report of the Head of the Police, who certainly ought to know the facts.

7. I may state that, so far as the graver crimes are concerned, the decrease is remarkable. There may have been a particular class of offences in which there is an apparent increase, but the reason for the apparent increase in this class of offences is to be attributed to the more perfect methods of discovering and dealing with offences of that particular kind. Are you acquainted with the whole of the school reading-books at present in use?—I cannot say that I have studied them carefully. I have read, I think, nearly all of them.

8. Considering the nature of these reading-books, do you think that the charge that they are “godless” is just?—I think if there is religious instruction in the books it is contrary to the Act, which says that the education given in our public schools must be purely secular.

9. But, considering that they are books for the use of the schools under the present system, do you think the charge is a fair charge—namely, that the system is a “godless” one?—My answer must be guarded. To say they are “godless,” is to say that they are opposed to religion. I do not think there is anything in them that is opposed to religion. But there is nothing in them to teach Christianity that I have seen; if there were, it would be contrary to the Act.

10. Here is one of these books. We have such subjects treated as “The Nativity,” “The Song of the Angels,” “Thy will be done,” “The Bridegroom cometh,” and others. Would you consider that these were distinctly religious and Christian?—I have not looked at them carefully. I do not think I have seen those particular books you refer to; but I must repeat that if Christianity be distinctly taught in any of the school-books it is contrary to the Education Act, which states that the teaching is to be purely secular.

11. *Mr. E. M. Smith.*] Have you had this question tested at a public meeting, outside the movement that is being made by the Churches in getting people to sign petitions?—I think the strongest test that could be taken was that at Palmerston North, where there was a fair canvass by outside people, and where it is proved that 88 per cent. of the people asked for it.

12. Would you think the outside canvass a fair test. Do you not think if it were on a public platform where the people would vote, it would be a fairer test?—I think not; people might be carried away by eloquence or oratorical display. I think that public opinion taken quietly would be a better test. We have no objection to it; we have not tried it.

13. Do you not think the fact of the clergy preaching in the churches on the Sunday evenings gives them an advantage. I was in church some time ago when the Bishop drew the attention of the congregation to the petition; do you not think that would have a great influence over public opinion?—I think it would.

14. Do you not think it would be a serious blow to New Zealand if we were to undo our education system by passing an Act of Parliament without referring the matter to the people?—We do not wish to undo it; we rather want to complete it.

15. You want to go back to denominationalism?—No; that is the thing we want to guard against.

16. Have you compared your Scripture lessons with the Nelson series of reading-books?—No, I have not. We go on the broad question that the instruction given in our schools is now ordered to be purely secular. We wish that it should not be purely secular, but that it should be distinctly founded on the Holy Scriptures and the Christian religion. I believe that we, as a large majority of the people of this country, are agreed that these Scripture lessons would secure that object.

17. Would not that be dictating by the Church, to compel people to adhere to dogmatic teaching?—I think that the present state of affairs tends more in that direction. I understand that there is permission to be had now for ministers to gather the children and give them lessons before and