

we go beyond the reading, and put that work into the hands of the teachers, it will tend to create all the feelings you mention; and the only hope is to put it in the hands of the ministers or others interested in teaching those who attend their own denominational churches?—Yes.

157. And you would go so far as to give them assistance, which you think would not interfere with their present duties?—Yes, on one half-day in the week. I think some of our teachers would volunteer to assist them on those days when they could be at liberty; but you would have the same objection raised as now to the clergymen going to the school. The clergymen say that privilege is of no practical value, for if some children have left school the others want to go too, as children value their time. In my suggestion it is practically a half-holiday to the children, to be allowed to go to the Sunday School on the Wednesday afternoon. If a child goes there on a Wednesday afternoon he takes his ticket to the teacher and that counts as his attendance for the afternoon. For the others, I would arrange an afternoon's work in such a way as would not give offence, and I would avoid teaching standard subjects, so that there could be no reasonable contention that the children attending religious classes were falling behind in standard work.

158. *Mr. Collins.*] I think the suggestion of Mr. Lee is a valuable one, and I think we can take cognisance of it; but are we not sitting as a Committee on the Irish School-books?—The only reason for my suggestion is, that if you pull down a house you should put up another in its place.

*Mr. Lang:* All I wanted was to show that Mr. Lee gave answers to questions; people reading his answers as printed might suppose that he was against religious teaching.

*Mr. Lee:* I merely remark that I do not wish it to be understood for a moment that I am opposed to religious instruction.

159. *The Chairman.*] For how many years have you been Inspector of Schools in New Zealand?—Twenty-two.

160. Have you been a teacher in the Old Country?—All my life.

161. How many years does that extend over?—I was teaching when I was twelve years old. It is forty-four years, in round numbers.

162. You speak with the experience of a practical teacher?—I have never been out of school during that time, except during holidays.

163. *Mr. Lang.*] I should like to ask how this idea would work in small schools, if four or five clergymen took charge on a Wednesday afternoon?—I have not said they should attend at the school; they could use any building. The State could allow the use of one or two rooms, if the school had several class-rooms. If not, the Sunday-school might be held anywhere convenient.

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The Chairman made the following statement: On Wednesday, the 16th October, I called at the residence of Archbishop Redwood and saw the Rev. Father Dawson, who informed me that Archbishop Redwood was in Picton, and was not expected to return to Wellington for some time. I stated that I had called with a view of ascertaining if the Roman Catholic Church intended to accept the invitation of the Public Petitions Committee (M to Z) to be represented and give evidence before the Committee on the question of the introduction of the Bible, or the Irish National Scripture Lesson-Book into the public schools of the colony; since which, as Chairman of the Committee, I have received the following communications:—

“DEAR SIR,—

“St. Mary's Cathedral, Wellington, 16th October, 1895.

“*Re* our conversation this morning, an urgent telegram was sent to His Grace Archbishop Redwood, S.M., a copy of which, together with reply, is herein enclosed.

“Some of the resident Roman Catholic clergy were also consulted on the matter of giving evidence before the Committee. Their final decision will probably be known to-morrow. As, however, the claims of the Roman Catholics of the colony are a matter of public notoriety, and in view of the scant courtesy with which Catholic sentiment has been treated by the Petitions Committee, there is a strong feeling that the tendering of further evidence is useless.

“I am, &c.,

“THOMAS DAWSON, Administrator.

“Chairman of Petitions Committee, House of Representatives.”

“Archbishop Redwood, Picton.

“(Copy.—Urgent.)

“PETITIONS COMMITTEE taking evidence *re* Bible and Scriptural readings in schools desire authoritative information as to Catholic sentiment, and whether possible to accept plan as solution of educational difficulty.

“FATHER DAWSON, Wellington.”

“Rev. Father Dawson, Wellington.

“(Copy.)

“CATHOLIC sentiment opposed to plan *re* Bible-readings as solution of educational difficulty.

“ARCHBISHOP REDWOOD, Picton.”

The last paragraph in this letter does not refer to the M to Z Public Petitions Committee, it refers to another Committee of the House—I presume it refers to the A to L Petitions Committee, to which was sent the petition from the Roman Catholics in reference to their request that their schools might be examined by Government Inspectors of Schools.

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