

It will be seen that the effect of Bible reading in schools is to increase the number of private schools (and for private schools, can be read Roman Catholic schools). In the three States where there is Bible reading in schools, the percentages of pupils in private schools are 20, 22, and 26, while in the other States the percentages are 14, 14, and 17½. This clearly shows that Catholics make greater efforts in Bible reading States to keep their children out of the State schools than they do in the other States. It is easy for the New Zealand Bible-in-schools Party to say that the system works well in those three Australian States. My figures go to show that by far the greater part of the Catholic children of those States do not attend the State schools, but are taught in their own Catholic schools.

I quote the manifesto again: 'If a child hears a portion of the Bible read every day; if the hard words are explained to him; and if the teacher does his duty by seeing that he remembers what was read on the previous day he is at any rate receiving elementary instruction, which will greatly facilitate the task of the Sunday school teacher and the clergyman.'

I wonder how many of the authors of the manifesto have had experience in primary school teaching. There are plenty of subjects in the school syllabus now without adding the above burden to the lot of the public school teacher. To do what is required (according to the manifesto), reading, explanation of hard words, and memorising, would take a teacher in an ordinary school nearly an hour a day. School teachers will be grateful to the party for their thoughtfulness in suggesting a little more work.

Another quotation: 'But it is not true that the clergy have neglected their duty in this respect; we could mention many places where they do teach in the schools, so far as it is possible for them.' It would be most interesting and instructive if the authors of the manifesto would quote figures showing how many Protestant clergyman have been giving religious instruction outside of school hours to children in the public schools of this Colony. Figures would prove their statement. Here are two extracts from the Australian Official Year Book, 1905: 'In South Australia, if the parents desire it, the minister may require the teachers to read to their children a portion of Scripture for a quarter of an hour each morning before the ordinary school work begins, but the reading must be 'without note or comment'. The regulations are silent as to the selection of the passages to be read and as to any conscience clause in favor of the teacher, but this is of little consequence as, virtually, no Scripture reading has been asked

'In Victoria and Queensland no teacher is allowed to give any other than secular instruction in any State school building. This clause was inserted in the Victorian Act on the motion of Mr. Wilberforce Stephens, who declared that it was intended as a protection to the teachers and that, as far as the Government was aware, the general feeling was in favor of such a protection.'

I hope the Bible-in-schools Party will read them carefully. They are worth reading and worth thinking about.

In conclusion, I wish to state that, although I am strongly opposed to Bible reading in schools, I am not one of those 'persons who look upon Christianity as an idle or noxious superstition.'

The following extract is from the Australian Year Book, 1905—Education (West Australia)—'The teaching in the Government schools is strictly secular, but the Bible is read, without comment, half an hour before school begins, to children whose parents express no objection to their attending same.' Will the Bible-in-schools League inform me if Bible reading is part of the West Australian schools' work? How can it be when it takes place 'half an hour before school begins?'

Mother Mary Josephine, Superioress of the Convent of Mercy, Mount Barker, celebrated her silver jubilee in the religious life on November 16. Dr. Dunne, Bishop of Wilcannia, was present at the celebrations.

The annual spiritual retreat for ladies, to be preached by the Rev. Father Kelly, S.J., at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Timaru, begins on January 17. Ladies desirous of attending should apply without delay to the Rev. Mother.

Messrs. Simon Brothers, the well-known boot and shoe importers and manufacturers, George St., Dunedin, and Main Road, South Dunedin, ask their friends and patrons to remember that their assortment of new season's goods is exceptionally choice, and that a study of their price list will prove that money can be saved by patronising this firm.

Diocesan News

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

(From our own correspondent.)

December 9.

His Grace the Archbishop will administer Confirmation at Wellington South on Sunday.

The Rev. Father O'Dwyer has been placed in the Pahiatua parish to assist the Rev. Father T. McKenna.

The convent now being erected at Island Bay for the Sisters of the Sacred Heart is rapidly approaching completion, and even now presents an imposing appearance. It is the object of much admiration on the part of the many visitors to this part of the district.

For some days past Catholic Maoris from various parts of New Zealand have been arriving at Otaki to take part in a singularly interesting ceremony. When His Grace the Archbishop last year journeyed to Rome, he was the bearer of a quaintly and picturesquely worded address from the Catholic Maoris to the Holy Father, and bore also with him a number of valuable gifts for presentation to his Holiness. The text of the address was as follows:—

'To the most Holy Father Pius the Tenth.—Greeting to you, O Father, dwelling in the house of mourning of our Holy Father Leo the Thirteenth, who has gone to eternal happiness. We, your children, exclaim from this corner of the Globe, "Go, O Leo, to God, to our Holy Mother Mary and to Saint Peter. Go to the exalted one, the powerful one, the holy one, go the bright star of God.'

'With these words we conclude our lament for the Holy Father Leo XIII. O Father, may you live for ever; you who have taken the place of the dead. Our hearts are filled with great joy that you have been elected to fill the seat of the holy ones. In you we see exemplified our proverbial saying, "When a chief falls, another immediately rises in his stead."

'O, Father, we, your children, are assembled here at Whangachu on this the 10th of April, 1904, in the year of Jubilee, for the consecration of our Church, which is called the Church of Our Blessed Lady conceived without sin. Many Catholic natives have come to be present at the gathering on this occasion. From Ngaitapa, Ngawairiki, Ngatituwharetoa, Ngatikauhata, Ngatitangi, Ngatikapu, Ngatitkorehe, and Ngaitahu tribes at this gathering on this day many words of welcome and congratulation were expressed for you in the presence of His Grace the Archbishop. You are our father, and you will lead us to the light which will bring us to the Ark of eternal salvation. We, your children, make application to God for you, and hope in our hearts that you will not forget us, your children. We now conclude, may you live for ever, and may God guard and protect you.'

The address and gifts were duly presented by His Grace to the Holy Father, who in return sent a letter and a number of gifts to the Maoris. The letter is as follows:—

'Most Illustrious and Reverend Lord,—His Holiness has received the address sent to him through your Grace from the chiefs of the Maori tribes in New Zealand, expressive of the affectionate and heartfelt sentiments of all their Catholic people. Accordingly, I ask you by direction of the august Pontiff to convey to the knowledge of those good tribes and their chiefs that His Holiness has received with the greatest pleasure their homage paid both to himself and to his predecessor, Leo XIII., of holy memory. The perpetuation of the devotedness which the Maori people of New Zealand profess for the Vicar of Christ is ample proof that they preserve preciously the spirit of faith in regard to the Roman See, and that their life is always actuated by the precepts of Jesus Christ, whoever happens to be the person who continues His preaching to them from the heights of the Vatican. Wherefore, the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius X., embraces with paternal affection all his Catholic children in New Zealand, and while he thanks them for the discharge of their duty, he reciprocates with each of them greetings expressed in their address. And, moreover, as a pledge of his particular benevolence, His Holiness imparts his Apostolic blessing to the chiefs of the aforesaid tribes, and to all the faithful belonging to them, whilst further adding that His Holiness bestows a like favor in a special manner upon your Grace, who devotes the labors of your apostolate to the said people, I remain, with sentiments of the most sincere esteem, your Grace's sincere servant,

✠ MERRY DEL VAL (Cardinal).'