

THE GENERAL ELECTION

CANDIDATES REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

In addition to the replies given by candidates whose views on the education question have been already referred to in our columns, we have received the following batch of questions and answers from various correspondents. The reports have in all cases been taken from the local press.

THE THAMES.

MR. TAYLOR AT WHAREPOA.

Mr. E. H. Taylor delivered a political address, a good part of which was in defence of the present Government, in the Wharepoa Hall on Friday night.

The speaker dealt mainly with the land question, the debt of the Dominion, and also its contribution to the British Navy. He declared himself to be a firm supporter of our present system of secular education, deeming the Bible too sacred a book to be placed on a level with a geographical or arithmetical text-book.

Our correspondent informs us that in all probability an opportunity will be taken of placing the Catholic case before the other candidate—Mr. T. W. Rhodes, also a Liberal—clearly, convincingly and concisely before the election takes place.

OAMARU.

MR. MILLIGAN'S MEETING.

There was a fair attendance at the Opera House last night, when Mr. Robert Milligan gave his first public address here in furtherance of his Parliamentary candidature. Questions were asked as follows:—

Are you in favor of State aid to Catholic schools?

Answer.—No.

Are you in favor of the present system of education?

Answer.—Yes.

These were all the questions of importance.

MR. LEE AT THE OPERA HOUSE.

The tremendous interest at present being manifested in things political was evidenced in a striking manner at the Opera House last night, the building, top and bottom, being crowded.

Questions.

Would you favor State aid to Catholic schools?

Answer.—I am not in favor of State aid to any denominational institution.

Are you in favor of Bible reading in schools?

Answer.—No. Not compulsory.

Are you in favor of introducing the Continental Sunday here?

Answer.—I have travelled a good deal on the Continent and I don't know what the Continental Sunday is.

In reply to other questions, Mr. Lee said that he supported the present system of education. That he approved of British and Canadian immigration. That he approved of marriage by a clergyman or any other persons vested by law with the power.

He declared himself as unfavorable to the inspection of all institutions under the control of any religious denomination. A measure like this would involve every church and Sunday school in the Dominion. There was nothing to lead him to think that they were improperly conducted.

With regard to the inspection of churches, schools, academies, nunneries, convents, etc., he said that if a measure were brought forward that once a year a public officer should visit them for the purpose of ascertaining if the inmates wished to remain, he would support it.

HON. T. Y. DUNCAN AT THE OPERA HOUSE.

A Friendly Reception.

Question: Are you in favor of a uniform system of education in the European public schools of New Zealand?

Answer: I am not. School teachers and committees should have the opportunity of varying the system according to the beset needs of those in their care. (Applause.)

Question: Will you undertake to support the present system of education, which has given such satisfactory results for the past 34 years?

Answer: I don't think it should be tied to any hard and fast rule. If you did you would leave no chance of improvement. (Applause.)

Question: Will you support a measure for the inspection of all nunneries, convents, and schools controlled by religious bodies?

Answer: I believe it is not for me to answer any question into which religion enters.—(Loud cheers.)

A voice: 'Why did you answer it before?'

Mr. Duncan said: 'The chairman tells me that the others have answered it, so I'll answer it too. I would be in favor of an inspection where it was shown that there was anything wrong.'

Question: Are you in favor of State aid to Roman Catholic schools? Yes or No?

Answer: That is the way some of the smart ones ask a question. (Applause.)

WAIRAU.

MR. WIFFEN BEFORE THE ELECTORS.

This (education) was a question which proved a difficult one for 75 per cent. of candidates, but to him it presented no difficulties whatever, and he could present it to his hearers just as it presented itself to him. He would speak as plain as words could put it on this question. For him it had no concern whatever; and it did not matter whether his election was lost or won, nothing would induce him to approach the question of education in any other than a straightforward manner. His strong point in connection with this question was that the Catholic schools in the Dominion should be subsidised. They had broken away from the State school because the education system was not acceptable to them. It was described by the Rev. Dr. Gibb, one of the greatest Presbyterian divines in the Dominion, as 'a rotten and Godless system.' The Catholics every year had over 12,000 children attending their schools, and the saving thereby to this country through the system they had adopted was over £50,000 per annum. These people claimed that they were right, and no one had any right to denounce them and say they were wrong; nor should they have to bear a tax because they held different views from other people. They paid £50,000 a year because they preferred to do so rather than give their children a Godless education. During the last 30 years the Catholic people had paid £1,500,000 for the education of their children, and he asked them if it was right that any section of the people of this glorious and heaven-blessed country should be subject to such a tax, just because they were not of the same religious persuasion as the others. They were entitled to something, and should receive a subsidy from the Government for the education of their children. He would tell them that if there was no one else man enough to take this matter up and bring in a Bill providing for these people in this way Arthur Wiffen would. He looked upon this question in a Christian-like manner, and he meant everything he had said upon it. There were only two places they could go to after death, and he hoped to go to the best and to help others to go there. (Laughter.) The day had gone by when the Government was able to penalise people because they thought as they liked in this or any question.

WELLINGTON CENTRAL.

MR. FLETCHER'S ANSWERS.

The candidate was occupied over half an hour in answering questions. He said he was not in favor of prohibition. He was not in favor of a State grant to Catholic schools, at the same time he appreciated the devotion given by that denomination to its own schools. He stood for free, secular and compulsory education. Mr. Fletcher was accorded a vote of thanks and con-