

third in each State is centred in a seaport capital. Blair's *History of Australia* shows that both States were equally affected by convict settlements. During over 30 years of the convict system, what we now call Victoria was part of New South Wales. Victoria had penal settlements, and received hundreds of convicts from Tasmania as well as from New South Wales proper.

15. Thus the only great factor of difference affecting the character of the two peoples is that for 50 years in Victoria, the State, while friendly towards religion, kept secular education as the only education it could justly provide for from State taxes. The religious instruction of the young was left entirely to the only divinely-appointed agency for that purpose, the Churches. On the other hand, in New South Wales religious instruction has for 50 years been largely left to the State with its formal, soulless, unspiritual, unscriptural system of official religious instruction. Let me see which system has done most for the children who have grown up under these systems.

16. First, as to positive results. Victoria has a much higher standard of church attendance, of Sunday school attendance, of Sabbath observance, and has about double the missionary activity of New South Wales. Victoria, with a population of about 200,000 less than that of New South Wales, has 430 more Sunday schools, 6500 more Sunday school teachers, and 63,000 more Sunday scholars than has New South Wales. These facts from official records speak for themselves.

17. Now as to criminal records, which are surely an evidence of the type of character of a community. Note clearly here that it is not stated or meant that Bible-reading in State schools has produced crime. Such a statement would not only be ridiculous, it would be untrue and blasphemous. It is claimed, however, that criminal records will help to show whether the Victorian system of religious instruction by the Churches alone has a greater guiding and restraining effect on character than has the State-provided religious instruction of New South Wales, with the inevitable deadening influence on the work of the Churches. State interference always has, and always will, rob religion of its free and essential spirit.

[The following figures are from the latest Year Books of the Commonwealth. No special years are selected. Averages are taken for periods of from 5 to 15 latest years.]

18. New South Wales shows 50 per cent. more summary convictions in Magistrates' Courts than does Victoria; drunkenness, 230 per cent. more than Victoria; Supreme Court convictions, 60 per cent. more than Victoria; divorces, under same conditions, 90 per cent. more; illegitimacy, 21 per cent. more; persons in gaol per year, 45 per cent. more than Victoria. In one year there were 2458 cases before the New South Wales juvenile courts.

19. Can Dean Fitchett point to any factor so likely to account for these uniformly huge differences in every class of crime as the factor I point to—viz., that Victoria has used the unhampered, free, spiritual, responsible activities of the churches to train the character of its young people for 50 years; that the State of Victoria has kept its hands off religious instruction, for which it has no call and no fitness, while on the other hand New South Wales has relied largely on the perfunctory, soulless form of circumscribed religious instruction that can be given by State officialism?

If the difference of criminal records were as enormously in favor of New South Wales, would not the Bible-in-schools advocates be hurling them at us as evidences of the character-building effect of their method of dealing with religious instruction? Even as it is, many clerics repeatedly quote New Zealand crime as the direct result of our secular system. Is it not remarkable that in the three Australasian States—Victoria, South Australia, and New Zealand—where the State rightly leaves religious instruction to the Churches, these three States have the lowest records for crime in Australasia? When the whole religious work is undertaken by the Churches, is not the work better done, as shown by these results?

20. If one needs further proof that State organised religious instruction is a dead thing, let Archdeacon Irvine speak. This clergyman, introducing an Anglican deputation to the Minister of Public Instruction in New South Wales, a few weeks ago, said: "Our committee see the danger of the country to a large extent becoming materialistic."

Following this, Mr. Hole, secretary of this Diocesan Committee, said: "For 18 years the provisions of the Act regarding religious instruction 'had not been carried out as was intended.' We wish this matter dealt with, so that critics of the public school system could no longer describe these schools as 'godless institutions.'"

Actually, we have here the admission that unless the religious instruction is carried on differently from the manner prevailing for the last 18 years critics would have grounds for calling the "Bible in Schools and Right of Entry for Clergy" system of religious instruction "godless."

In reply, the Minister of Education said: "I cannot promise to extend the present system. The clergy are not using their opportunities. If religious instruction were not given in the schools, the onus fell on those who had the right and had not availed themselves of it." Here is reliable evidence of the "condition of things in Australia" under the vaunted system we are asked to introduce into New Zealand.

Space is lacking for further evidence already at hand. All the above has been adduced from utterances of advocates of the system and from State and Church official records, where defects in the system are not sought and the best side is turned outwards. If this does not utterly condemn the system, then its advocates can take the palm for spineless and unprincipled support of any or every policy put forth in the supposed interests of religion.

21. The various points in this article have been consecutively numbered. We have surely the right to claim that Dean Fitchett shall not conveniently ignore what he would be forced to admit. We ask that the points be taken seriatim, and that for every point, the Dean indicates briefly or otherwise whether he can or cannot gainsay the point raised. When he has dealt with the above points, further evidence from Australia will be presented from the most unbiassed and reliable sources.

(Note.—All the inverted commas are mine.—J.C.)

Diocesan News

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

(From our own correspondent.)

June 28.

St. Mary's Christian Doctrine Society will hold a progressive euchre party in St. Patrick's Hall on July 23.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin Kennedy and the Misses Kennedy, who have been on a trip to the United Kingdom, returned by the Remuera on Monday evening.

The ladies' auxiliary of the St. Vincent de Paul Society held a most successful euchre party on Wednesday evening last. There was a large attendance, and a most enjoyable evening was spent.

His Grace the Coadjutor-Archbishop has been requested by the Wellington South parish committee of the Catholic Federation to repeat his lecture on the aims and objects of the Federation, and has kindly consented to do so.

The Sacred Heart branch of the H.A.C.B. Society held its annual social last Wednesday evening. The function proved very successful, there being over one hundred persons present. The committee responsible for the arrangements were Messrs. J. A. Humphrey, L. Leydon, M. McGahey, R. P. Flanagan, M.

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