

17,547, upon a vote of 130,959, 7651 votes being informal.

(b) The lessons which I send for your perusal have been framed with the most scrupulous care to exclude any denominational, sectarian, or controversial matter, and as such as, in my opinion, cannot fail to be conducive to the moral and religious improvement of those who study them.

(c) The clergy of your denomination have the right of free access to the State schools for the purpose of giving religious instruction to the children of that denomination under regulations framed in accordance with law.

Under these circumstances, I contend that there is no just ground of complaint against the decision of the people being given effect to, nor do I see any special connection between this subject and the subject of endowment.

Your Lordship's main purpose, however, is to ask me whether the Government have any intention of proposing endowment to your schools. In reply, I may say that the Government have no such intention, as they are of opinion that a majority of the people of this State are opposed to grants of public money to any religious denomination for educational purposes.—I have, etc.,

(Sgd.) D. Denham.

This letter was laid on the table of the Queensland Parliament on the 25th October, 1811, and was accepted without challenge in Parliament.

#### BISHOP CLEARY'S ALLIES.

Forty-two persons met the other day, and in solemn conclave decided once and for all that there is to be no religious instruction in the State schools of New Zealand. This decision will no doubt receive the weight which is its due, and which will be increased by the fact that the same 42 persons seriously decided that the 1,000,000 of people in New Zealand should not be allowed to decide a matter upon which the 42 have finally declared themselves. That at the time of this momentous vote these 42 members were officially supplied by one of their own officers with Bishop Cleary's pamphlet against religious instruction, liberty, and an open Bible, may account for their decision. Bishop Cleary will doubtless welcome allies who are prepared to muzzle the people of New Zealand, a muzzle specially indicated as most appropriate for the parents of the children in the

schools from the point of view of the opponents of Religious Instruction.

#### PRESBYTERIAN OPINION.

At the annual Conference of the Presbyterian Bible Classes held in January at Temuka, the following resolution was carried unanimously and with such enthusiasm that the members rose to their feet and pledged themselves to give effect to it:—"That this Conference of Bible Class delegates (there being 535 registered members) accepts the policy of the Bible in State Schools League, and the members pledge themselves to earnestly support it by assisting to form branches of the League, and that in the meantime they suggest that all interested should take advantage of the present facilities for giving religious instruction in State schools."

Additional confirmation is continually forthcoming confirming the statement made by the New Zealand League that the religious instruction system works satisfactorily in Australia, and causes no friction. The Director of Education, Western Australia, in a letter received last month, writes, "The system continues to work smoothly here."

At Dubbo, New South Wales, 513 visits have been paid to the district schools during last year for the purpose of imparting religious instruction to the children belonging to their respective Churches. There were 163 visits paid by the Church of England, 143 by the Presbyterians, 100 by the Methodists, and 107 by other denominations.

It is alleged by opponents that the larger number of Church of England visits paid indicates that the Church has an undue advantage. Those who make this statement ignore the fact that the Church of England visits correspond with the percentage of the children attending the schools. It is estimated that somewhat more than half the children attending State schools belong to the Church of England. A little arithmetical calculation will show that the visits paid by the various denominations fairly correspond with the respective strength of those denominations according to their percentage of the population.

Writing to the "Nelson Mail" on the Bible in Schools question, Rev. J. H. Collier says:—"According to his letter in your issue of to-day, the Roman Catholic Bishop of

Auckland is greatly concerned about the statement of the State education authorities of Tasmania that 'the Bible in Schools' system in that State is accepted by all denominations as a happy solution of the religious difficulty.' The Bishop's letter is a long and desperate attempt to explain away the plain, blunt, and official statement of the highest authority on public schools in Tasmania. Your many readers may like to know the opinion of one of the high authorities in New South Wales, as given in the 'Sydney Daily Telegraph,' for the Christmas holidays. He at the breaking-up of the schools says: 'One of the finest things in connection with the State school teachers is their public tolerance in regard to matters of faith. Privately they may hold views of the most extreme type; they may hold office in religious orders, but to each other, to the school, and to the public generally, there is no question of faith or creed, Gentile or Jew, Catholic or Protestant, Agnostic or Rationalist. They have loyally interpreted the religious provisions of the Public Instruction Act, having in mind one thing only—the moral, physical, and mental advancement of the children under their care. Whatever political parties or differing denominations may do or desire, the teachers have shown through years of unswerving fidelity that the provisions of the Public Instruction Act are carefully carried out.' There are 6000 teachers employed in the State schools of New South Wales, and it is unspeakable presumption for Bishop Cleary or the Archbishop in New South Wales to say that they shall not be allowed to give religious instruction in the State schools. Christianity has been the guiding light of our race back through the ages to the days of the Apostles, and shall we banish it from our children, and for the first time in history refuse to acknowledge it or have it taught in our schools? The President of the Children's Court in New South Wales, sneaking from a public platform a few weeks ago, said that he found by inquiry that almost all the children brought to the Court by the police knew nothing whatever about religion, and had received no religious instruction; and, further, that very few of them even 14 or 15 years of age knew how to read or write. Evidently, the compulsory attendance clauses of the Act have not been carried out in these cases."