

Mr. Sidey.

BIBLE LESSONS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS PLEBISCITE.

ANALYSIS.

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A BILL INTITULED

AN ACT to provide for taking a Poll of the Electors of New Zealand on the Question of opening the Public Schools of the Colony daily with the Lord's Prayer and giving Bible Lessons in such Schools. Title.

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BE IT ENACTED by the General Assembly of New Zealand in Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1. The Short Title of this Act is "The Bible Lessons in Public Schools Plebiscite Act, 1905." Short Title.

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2. On the day appointed for the taking of the poll (hereinafter called "the electoral poll") of the electors in each electoral district for the return of a member of the House of Representatives for such district at the first general election that shall take place after the commencement of this Act, and simultaneously therewith, a poll (hereinafter called "the said poll") of the electors of such district shall also be taken upon the question to be submitted to them under this Act: Poll to be taken on day of next general election.

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Provided that the said poll shall be taken in every district, notwithstanding that in any district no electoral poll may be required to be taken for such election as aforesaid.

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3. At the said poll the said question shall be submitted in the form appearing in the Schedule to this Act, and the voting-papers shall be printed in the form set forth in such Schedule. Question to be submitted and form of voting-paper.

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4. The poll shall be taken as follows:— Manner of taking poll.

(a.) The Returning Officer of every electoral district shall give not less than fourteen days' public notice of the taking of the said poll.

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(b.) The polling-places in each district shall be the same as those used at the taking of the electoral poll.

(c.) The Returning Officer shall appoint such person or persons as he shall think fit to be his deputy or deputies, and a sufficient number of poll-clerks to assist him in the taking of the said poll.

- (d.) The Returning Officer shall, upon the day appointed, proceed to take the said poll in the manner provided by "The Electoral Act, ,," for taking the electoral poll, and shall provide voting-papers and all things necessary for taking the said poll. 5
- (e.) The voter shall vote by marking a cross either in the square opposite the word "Yes" or in the square opposite the word "No" on the voting-paper. If he marks a cross in the square opposite the word "Yes" his vote shall be counted in favour of the proposal that the public schools of the colony shall be opened daily with the Lord's Prayer and that lessons from the Bible be included in the regular curriculum of such schools, but that teachers who on conscientious grounds object to take part in such opening exercise or to give such lessons shall not be required to do so, and that the children of parents who on conscientious grounds object to their children taking part in such opening exercise or being taught such lessons shall not be required to be or remain in the school while such lessons are being given; and if he marks a cross in the square opposite the word "No" on the voting-paper his vote shall be counted against such proposal. 10 15 20
- (f.) Every person who, at the time when the said poll is taken, is entitled to vote at the electoral poll shall be entitled to one vote at the said poll. 25
- (g.) All the provisions of "The Electoral Act, 190 ,," as regards taking a poll shall, *mutatis mutandis*, apply to the taking of the poll under this Act.

Publication of result of poll and notification to Minister of Education.

5. As soon as practicable after the result of the said poll has been ascertained the Returning Officer shall give public notice of the total number of valid votes recorded, and of the number of valid votes recorded in favour of the said proposal, and the number of valid votes recorded against the same, and the number of informal votes; and he shall also forward to the Minister of Education a statement of the said particulars. 30 35

Minister to have statement of result prepared and gazetted, and to lay same before Parliament.

6. As soon as conveniently may be after the said poll shall have been taken the Minister shall cause a statement to be prepared showing the particulars mentioned in section *five* of this Act in respect of each electoral district, and also the total number of valid votes recorded for and against the said proposal in all the electoral districts of the colony, and the total number of informal votes. Such statement shall be published in the *Gazette*, and shall be laid before Parliament on the first day of its session in the year one thousand nine hundred and *six*. 40

SCHEDULE.

VOTING-PAPER.

ARE you in favour of the proposal that the public schools of the colony shall be opened daily with the Lord's Prayer, and that in such schools Bible lessons shall be taught to the children by the teachers during school hours, subject to a conscience clause for teachers and scholars?

YES.	
NO.	

If the voter desires to vote for the proposal he must mark a cross in the square opposite the word "Yes." If he desires to vote against it he must mark a cross in the square opposite the word "No."