

1. Ten years ago, when I assumed the duties of my present office, I found provisions for separate schools in the school act, and a few of them in operation—about as many Protestant as Roman Catholic. I determined to know neither religious sect nor political party in the discharge of my official duties. Believing that Roman Catholics had been hardly treated in Ireland, I resolved as far as I could, to give them no just cause of complaint in Upper Canada; and, if there is any one class of the community that I have endeavored to benefit, as such, more than another, it is the Roman Catholics. My friendly bearing towards them has subjected me more than once to severe criticisms from some Protestant writers. During the life of Dr. Power, late Roman Catholic Bishop of Toronto, and until Bishop Charbonnel commenced his crusade and agitation three years ago, no complaints were heard against the separate school provisions of the school law. Bishop Power, virtually a Canadian, being a native of Nova Scotia, had a patriotic desire to elevate the Roman Catholic population of the country, and believed that that would be best effected by their children being educated with the children of other classes, wherever party feeling did not oppose insuperable obstacles to it. Bishop Charbonnel (who, on my recommendation, was, before his arrival in Toronto, appointed a member of the Council of Public Instruction for Upper Canada, in place of Bishop Power,) professed the same views and feelings during a year or more after his arrival. Then he began to attack mixed schools, as such, then to attack the character of our schools generally, then the character of the people at large, then the provisions of the school law, demanding that municipalities should be compelled to build school-houses for separate schools, and support them the same as public schools. How frivolous were his complaints, how groundless his statements, and how unreasonable his views, is known from the correspondence which took place between him and myself during the year 1852, which was printed by order of the House of Assembly.

2. But what has been my course of proceeding? Not only was there no complaint against the law, or any part of my administration of it from 1845 to 1852, but when the school bill of 1850 was under consideration, and a desire was expressed that the option of having such separate schools should be with the applicants and not with the municipalities, as it had been in cities, towns, and villages, I so framed the 19th section that it was cordially approved of by the acting Ecclesiastical Heads of the Roman Catholic Church, and voted for by all its members in the legislature.

The Roman Catholics demanding more than one separate school in Toronto, and the judges having decided that but one could be legally demanded in a school section, (which each city or town was held to be,) I prepared and recommended the passing of the act 14 & 15 Vic., chap. 111, which gave the right of a separate school in each ward of a city or town; and for which I afterwards received the formal thanks of Bishop Charbonnel and Vicar General McDonald.

Then, when in 1852, Bishop Charbonnel complained so vehemently of the injustice of taxing supporters of separate schools at all, according to the provisions of the act, I prepared and submitted in August of that year, the fourth section of the supplementary school act, 16 Vic. chap. 185,—which exempted the supporters of