

A SHORT CONTROVERSY IN REGARD TO THE AD- RELIGION INTO POLITICS, AND INCIDENTAL

Dr. Ryerson, M.P.P., of Toronto having in recent speeches, and in the Separate Schools as by the Imperial law established in this Province (Province of Quebec), and having seen fit to indulge in language grossly alleging that they, (the Catholic Hierarchy), had been bought by special favour by other considerations, and, with the Catholic laity of the Province, stood government, and were the means whereby that government was kept in the Toronto Empire by Mr. J. A. Macdonell, (Greenfield), President of the Glengarry:—

to the Editor of the *Empire*

SIR,—I read in your columns a short time since a letter from my young friend, Dr. Ryerson, which was a very trenchant arraignment of the local Government, and contained much with which I and many who think with me can cordially sympathize, but which had in some respects, I venture to suggest, better have remained unwritten.

I take particular exception to Dr. Ryerson's remarks with regard to what he is pleased to term "the solid Catholic vote," which he alleges is at the beck and bidding of Sir Oliver Mowat and constitutes the backbone of his party. I challenge the truth of the statement, and as a Conservative I impugn the wisdom of its utterance and too frequent iteration.

The Government of this province is carried on for the benefit of all Her Majesty's subjects resident therein, whatever their faith and lineage. Dr. Ryerson is, I believe, of English descent and a Methodist. I, for instance, happen to be of Scotch descent and a Catholic. We agree, so far as I understand, in considering that the present Government, owing to its having been so long administered by one set of individuals, has virtually become a bureaucracy, which is repugnant to our conception of what constitutes a proper system of administration; the manipulation of the licenses for the sale of liquor and its diversion from its legitimate ends into a source of political buckstering is a truly indefensible; it has become a positive abuse, and should be abated; the timber resources of the country we consider are being unwisely drawn upon, and being part of the provincial capital and the heritage of those who are to come after us, the Government as trustees for the time being must be held strictly to account for any improvident management of a trust so important to future generations; the frequent appointment to office of gentlemen who hold seats in the Legislature has become almost a scandal, and if continued will lead the electorate to believe that the furtherance of their own ends and the feathering of their own nests is the object which our public men have chiefly in view and that the Government encourages the practice and holds out these inducements to men to gain their political support to the detriment, if not the subversion, of political independence.

These are all matters of a public nature, fit subjects for discussion, upon which men can properly agree or agree to disagree. It is perfectly legitimate for Dr. Ryerson and myself for instance, or for any other individuals possessed of the franchise, to criticize the course of the Government in respect of them, and the Methodists and Catholics of the

province and all others can and do in their opinions in regard to them.

But there are certain other subjects upon which discussion is inadvisable, not unwise, ineffectual, and eaten to lead to no good results.

Confederation was, owing to a variety of circumstances, a compromise, and in its nature a compact, solemn and earnestly hoped and believed, embodied in the charter, as agreed upon by the provinces ratified by the States of all parties in Britain, and promulgated by the British North America Act. Certain rights were guaranteed to the Protestant minority of Lower Canada and the Catholic minority of this province in regard to their respective schools. It was reasonable and fair that should be the case, and without it Confederation would have been an impossibility, and without these safeguards it cannot successfully be carried on.

The Governments of the provinces representing the Crown were charged with the carrying out of the provisions of the Imperial Act appertaining to schools, and when they fail to do so in the manner contemplated by the Act is open to the Protestants of Quebec the Catholics of Ontario to complain. But it is a matter of no concern to Catholics of Quebec or the Protestants of Ontario how or in what manner schools of the other denomination maintained or conducted, further, that all fair minded men of the majority in either province will admit that no injustice is done to minority, or, if done, that they should rectify it.

I cannot call to mind an instance of complaint upon the part of the Protestant minority in Quebec in respect to non-fulfilment or improper administration of the law as regards their schools, and it is unjust to the Catholic majority to state that neither political nor among that majority has ever sought to make this provision of the Imperial enactment in respect to the Protestant schools or its just and liberal fulfilment a ground of attack upon the other.

Are the Protestants of Ontario tolerant and less just than the Catholics of Quebec? Have they less respect for the solemn terms of a treaty, and we go to another province and to the men of another race than ourselves for lessons as to how to carry out a binding upon us in honour, obligation which the Sovereign and Parliament Great Britain have entrusted to fulfil?

Or is there behind it all a bias against and an intolerance of the Catholic faith; and does Dr. Ryerson, a Conservative Catholic, such as not to join in a crusade against the Government because it has done