

The Colonist

THURSDAY, JANUARY 2, 1896. Published Every Monday and Thursday. The Colonist Printing & Publishing Company, Limited Liability.

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ADVERTISING RATES. REGULAR COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING, as distinguished from every other kind of advertising...

MR. BODWELL'S SPEECH. Mr. Bodwell's eloquent and elaborate speech on the Manitoba school question is published in full in Saturday's issue of the Times.

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Near the beginning of his address Mr. Bodwell said: It also goes without saying that any party who ask to be intrusted with the administration of affairs should be able to expound their policy upon substantial and convincing grounds...

At this point the eloquent speaker should have stopped, for he had in the sentences he had just uttered pronounced a full and complete condemnation of the Liberal party. On no question that is before the people have the leaders of that party been able to expound their policy on substantial and convincing grounds.

They have on the contrary conspicuously failed to establish the wisdom and expediency of their plans. On the school question particularly their policy has been a policy of concealment, silence and delay. They have, on one pretence and another, avoided telling the people of the Dominion what course they would pursue on the school question if the direction of the affairs of the Dominion were placed in their hands.

They have gone no further than to say that they would institute an inquiry to ascertain the facts connected with the question. As Mr. Bodwell well knows an inquiry is not a policy. It is even when it is needed a mere preliminary to action. But every one knows what a commission of inquiry in a political sense generally means. It is a device to postpone the real consideration of an inconvenient question, a plausible way of silencing for a time the enthusiastic advocates of a cause which a party or a Government find it embarrassing to deal with immediately.

There have been inquiries on the labor question and on the prohibition question, and what have they done to advance the cause of prohibition and labor? But on this question of the Manitoba schools there is really nothing to find out. It has been before the courts for many years and every scrap of information that can be found out with respect to it has been collected and can easily be obtained by anyone who takes an interest in the question. It is therefore easy to see that the demand for a commission of inquiry into the facts in relation to the Manitoba school question is made by the Liberal leaders to give them a plausible pretext for not expounding their policy on the school question. They have not, as yet, expounded that policy on convincing or any other grounds. They have, therefore, no claim, as Mr. Bodwell well observes, "to exercise the powers which they seek to obtain, and have no right to the confidence of the people."

And there is no exception of the Liberal policy on the school question to be found in the speech of the Liberal party's Victoria advocate. A very large part of the speech is taken up with the description of the Manitoba separate schools under the Manitoba law of 1870. This we contend has nothing to do with the question which the electors of Victoria have now to consider. The statements as to the inefficiency of those schools is denied by persons who know

more about them than Mr. Bodwell or Mr. Wade, who appears to be his authority. But admitting that those schools were not so good as they might be under the circumstances whose fault was that? The schools were under the control of the local Government. If that Government neglected its duties the school system was not to blame. Under a neglectful and inefficient administration the schools would be bad, no matter whether the system were denominational or undenominational. The logical conclusion to be drawn from Mr. Bodwell's reasoning, is that the separate school system is inherently bad, and that it cannot produce good results, no matter how it is administered. Is this a sound conclusion? The separate school system has been in operation in Ontario for many years. Does it produce the deplorable results described by Mr. Bodwell. We have heard that the people of Ontario are pleased with their school system, and that they point with pride to the results which it has produced and is producing. There are some politicians, but surely Mr. Bodwell is not one of them, who say that the remedial order required the people of Manitoba to reproduce the old schools with all their defects. Neither the judgment of the Privy Council nor the order which was intended to give it effect proposed such an absurdity. It must be admitted that the defects of the old system were the results of inefficient administration. It is taking a great deal for granted to suppose that extending to the minority in Manitoba the power to assess themselves for the support of schools in which the religion in which they believe will be taught is to have the effect of recalling to life the bad administration of a past generation and of throwing the country back into the condition in which it was twenty years ago and more. This, however, is assuming that the Government of Manitoba will consent to redress the grievance of the minority. This they have declared they will never do. If the enactment of remedial legislation is left to the Parliament of the Dominion, which now appears almost certain, is it to be supposed that that body will cause the old inefficient Manitoba schools with all their faults to be reproduced? No one yet knows what the remedial legislation to be submitted to Parliament will be like, but it is reasonable to conclude that every precaution which experience—the experience of Ontario—can suggest will be taken to make the schools established under it effective. It is not to be believed that the Manitoba minority wish to have their children badly educated or that they will support a government that will give their schools which have all the faults and deficiencies of the schools under the old inefficient Provincial administration. It will have to be admitted that in expatiating on the defects of the old and badly administered system of education in Manitoba Mr. Bodwell expounded a great deal of eloquence to very little purpose.

As a matter of fact, the objection of Roman Catholics to schools such as alone receive State aid under the Act of 1890 is conscientious and deeply rooted. If this had not been so, if there had been a system of public education acceptable to Catholics and Protestants alike, the elaborate enactments which have been the subjects of so much controversy and consideration would have been unnecessary. It is notorious that there were acute differences of opinion between Catholics and Protestants on the education question prior to 1870. This is recognized and emphasized in almost every line of the enactments of 1890. There is no doubt either what the points of difference were, and it is in the light of these that the 22nd section of the Manitoba Act of 1870, which was in truth a parliamentary compact, must be interpreted. If the following passage of the judgment does not indicate how the difficulty may be settled, what does it mean? "It is certainly not essential that the statutes repealed by the Act of 1890 should be re-enacted, or that the precise provisions of these statutes should be again made law. The system of education embodied in the Act of 1890 is not commensurate with the needs of the province, and the wants of the great majority of the inhabitants of the province. All legitimate grounds of complaint would be removed if that system were supplemented by provisions which would remove the grievance upon which the appeal is founded, and were modified so far as might be necessary to give effect to these provisions."

Those who contend that the decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council has no binding force on the Government of the Dominion will have to conclude that the following paragraph appended to the Report of that committee, embodied in an Imperial Order in Council, means nothing at all: "Her Majesty having taken said report into consideration, and being pleased with the advice of the Privy Council to approve thereof and to order, as it is hereby ordered, that the recommendations and directions therein contained be punctually observed, obeyed and carried into effect in each and every particular. Whereupon the Governor General of the Dominion of Canada for the time being and all other persons whom it may concern are to take notice and govern themselves accordingly."

Why suppress the truth? The Times last night, with reference to the quotation from the judgment of the Privy Council contained in our article on Mr. Bodwell's speech, said: "Our neighbor might as well abandon the idea that it can becloud the issue by appealing to the second decision of the Privy Council, for that decision does not and cannot be made to conflict with the broad principle of provincial rights." It is a little remarkable that neither our contemporary nor Mr. Bodwell cited those very significant passages from the Privy Council's judgment in order that the public might judge for themselves whether or not they are in conflict with the broad principle of provincial rights. By the way, the Times has not yet told its readers what provincial rights are or where they are defined. It is making such an outcry about "provincial rights," it ought surely to know what they are. But we are compelled to conclude from many of its articles that it does not know much about the true nature of provincial rights, and that it does not want to know. However, it is right in this—the judgment of the Privy Council is not directly or by implication in conflict with provincial rights. Yet that judgment, as our readers have seen, points out that the Legislature of Manitoba, on the subject of education, can be constitutionally interfered with. We advise the constitutional lawyers of the Times to study that judgment carefully; it will well repay many perusal.

IMPROVED ACCOMMODATIONS. From the Spokane Spokesman. Captain J. W. Troup, manager of the Columbia & Kootenay Navigation Company, says that the new boat on the Columbia will be similar to the Nakusp, without the amount of passenger accommodations. It will be 160 feet in length and with a carrying capacity of 250 tons. The new boat now building at Nelson will be 140 feet in length, 200 tons capacity and somewhat larger than the steamer Nelson, and it is expected to be the fastest boat on the lakes. It is now being finished and furnished at Nelson and will be provided with that goes to make traveling comfortable. The company with the new boats will have a fleet of six steamers, the Nakusp, Lytton, Illecillewaet, and the new boat on the Columbia, the Nelson and a new boat on the Kootenay. With these boats they will be fully prepared for the next season's work.

GREENWAY'S GAGE. WINNIPEG, Dec. 30. (Special)—Premier Greenway left for Deloraine today to begin the provincial campaign. The Premier is confident that his government will be sustained by as large a majority as that they now enjoy. The Conservatives have called a meeting for Thursday night to name candidates for the Winnipeg constituencies.

AN EVIL FOLLOWER. Consumption follows neglected colds. Norway Pine Syrup cures coughs, asthma, sore throats, bronchitis and lung troubles. Price 25c and 50c.

INTERESTING LETTER. EQUAL TO THE BEST SWISS MILKS.

The Manitoba Schools Act of 1890 Introduced to Cover a Shady Transaction. Mr. Luxton Explains the Truth of the Matter—A Nefarious Contract.

The following letter from Mr. W. F. Luxton, once editor of the Winnipeg Free Press and a prominent and zealous member of the Liberal party in that province, throws light both on the political record of Mr. Joseph Martin and upon the true inwardness of the movement which culminated in the introduction and passing of the Manitoba school act of 1890: "ANYTHING BUT A SLANDER. To the Editor of the Nor'-Wester: Sir,—The Tribune of a recent date makes the following remark: 'The Mail and Empire says the public schools act of 1890 was introduced to cover a shady financial transaction. The Mail and Empire had better take care. Everyone here who knows the facts knows perfectly well that its statement is false and libellous.' It is not the statement of the Mail and Empire that is false, but this one of the Tribune. The 'shady financial transaction' alluded to is, of course, the infamous Northern Pacific contract—so 'shady' indeed was it that five of the previously staunchest government supporters, including the very best, most talented and most representative men in the Liberal party in the legislature, voted against it when the government brought it up for ratification; and not only that, but even after it had passed, so intense was the feeling in the country against it, that at the next session (a few months later) the government was constrained, by the force of adverse public opinion, to so modify it as to make it virtually a new contract, and after all, it was still so bad that the \$800,000 in cold cash expended in the enterprise and the other rights and privileges, fairly valued all the way from \$500,000 to \$750,000, secured by the company, brought the province practically no benefit—certainly, absolutely nothing in the way of competition, so far as rates were concerned, which was the sole reason given for attempting to secure another road than the C. P. R. for the province. The people thoroughly believed all this, and held this contract as an unpardonable sin against the government; and that they believed correctly was completely demonstrated by thorough ventilation of the whole matter in the courts by the trial of two actions, brought by Mr. Martin, for libel—the one criminal, the other civil—the trial of the criminal action lasting eleven days and resulting in the jury, nine to three, finding that I (who was the defendant in the premises) was warranted in impeaching the character of Mr. Martin for being a party to making the contract, and that he had been substantially the same alleged offence, against the Free Press, the paper of which I was editor and through whose columns my attacks upon the contract and the policy of Mr. Martin had been made. The trial of this action was before a special jury of twelve men, selected for their superior business abilities and standing, and resulted in the jury unanimously finding in favor of the Free Press. These two findings surely determined the merits and demerits of both the contract and the conduct of Mr. Martin (attorney-general) in being a party to making the contract. It is to be much regretted that the supreme court, this latter verdict was set aside (not reversed); but this was upon technicalities, pure and simple, and therefore, the merits were not affected. The people continued to demand the contract and the government. It overshadowed every other public question that came up; and the government was put to its test on it. It was, and finally, this desideratum was found in the abolition of separate schools. 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