

THE ACADIAN.

WOLFVILLE, N. S., MAR. 23, 1888

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The Kindergarten System.

We observe that much discussion is being given to the Kindergarten method of education. For many years it was advocated by leading educationalists, but without being adopted. Gradually it was used in Germany, Great Britain, and in the United States, and with the best results. Now we observe Nova Scotia is welcoming it. Truro is opening to it and the Association of Teachers recently voted in its favor in Halifax. The system has much to commend it and is steadily winning favor. We see no reason why it should not be tried in Wolfville. Indeed it has already been in partial but successful operation in a private school taught by Miss Whidden. Owing to the small number of pupils, especially during the late severe winter, the full benefits of the system have not been secured. But those who have patronized the school are much pleased with the work done and the method followed. Owing to our free public schools and other facilities afforded, Wolfville is not a favorable place for a private school, but if the district could add a Kindergarten department or the authorities of the academies could undertake such a school we have no doubt the children would receive much benefit from it. While other places are adopting every improvement in methods, it seems that an educational centre like Wolfville should not ignore modern ideas.

Imprisonment for Debt.

It is claimed that imprisonment for debt is a relic of barbarism and should therefore be erased from our statute book, so that the poor man who is unable or unwilling to meet his liabilities, could not ruthlessly be cast into prison, there to remain until the machinery of the law should be put into force to effect his discharge. With this end in view a measure has been submitted and is now before our Provincial Legislature. However popular such an enactment might be with a certain class of people who at all times keep their effects covered with mortgages and bills of sale so that their just creditors cannot make distraint of their goods and chattels, it could hardly be expected to find favor with a large proportion of our merchants and others who have large amounts of money due them by parties of small means, but quite able to pay their liabilities if they were made to believe that they could be forced to do so or suffer the disgrace of being cast into prison in case of default. Unwilling as we are to admit that there are any considerable number of debtors who would take advantage of such a statute to avoid the payment of a just debt, it nevertheless is true that there are some who if they could not be imprisoned, would have but little hesitancy in avoiding payment of any claim that would not prejudice them against subsequent transactions.

Arbor Day.

From the early settlement of the country the almost universal custom has been the denuding of our forests and the cutting down of every forest tree near our fields and dwellings. So devastating has this practice become, not only in this province but throughout the Dominion, that it has been found necessary in order to replace what has been ruthlessly destroyed by the hand of man, to set one day apart in each year to the planting of trees in our public grounds, church enclosures, highways, &c. The good results arising from the observance of this day are already beginning to be felt and it is to be hoped that efforts will be made this year even greater than in the past to encourage the planting of trees. After our school grounds, church enclosures, pleasure grounds and cemeteries are filled with trees, our highways should receive attention; and if every family residing outside of our villages and towns would make it a rule to plant one tree in each year for every number thereof on the roadside adjacent to their premises and give to them the same care and attention that is given to fruit and ornamental trees in our nurseries and orchards, very soon our highways would be improved and they would become as popular to the pleasure-seeker as are now our parks and pleasure grounds.

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Our Ottawa Letter.

OTTAWA, March 10.—The second week of the session has gone by and so far everything has passed off quietly and with very little discussion by either party. The estimates are now well in hand and the budget speech is now in order. This will not be delivered until week after next. The general impression is that the session will be a short one, some in fact running away with the idea that the first week in May will see the closing of the House. This is the prevailing idea of the most sanguine, but I am thinking if we get away by the Queen's Birthday we will all be doing well.

The general talk of the lobbies the past two days has been the official confirmation of the report that overtures have been made to Newfoundland to join "this Canada of ours." The Premier was asked whether the correspondence laid on the table of the Newfoundland Legislature, as published in the daily papers, was correct; and Sir John made the reply that it is true that negotiations have taken place. This announcement was too much for Sir Richard Cartwright and he referred to the ministerial papers as the "precious paid hirelings" of the Government because they had the enterprise to secure the news from Newfoundland. He then went for Sir John, and made a savage attack upon him, called him an autocrat, and said that constitutional parliamentary government was unknown in Canada. What troubled Sir John was that he thought that Sir Richard should have first spoken of the matter upon such suggestion as the Commons might have made. But this is not the way the grand old chief-stain puts in his work. He acts first and speaks about it afterwards. Of course the amendment made in regard to the majority seems to be of the opinion that if Newfoundland comes into the Confederation it will be the copstone of Sir John's career and round off Confederation. Pending the receipt of an official reply from the Newfoundland Government, it is hardly thought that there will be any attempt by the Reformers to compromise the negotiations now pending. A delegation comprising both sides of politics is expected to leave Newfoundland before the present House of Commons prorogues to await upon the Government here, and if everything goes on all right they will return home, report the progress they have made and appeal to the people.

The Manitoba delegation still remain in town and have had informal interviews with the members of the Privy Council and also with the Governor General. It is understood that with the Governor General the situation was thoroughly discussed. Peter Mitchell, the leader of the third party in the House, is evidently in one of his fighting moods, for he generally has something to say in every discussion that takes place. During the discussion upon Manitoba affairs resulting from the fact that Governor General, Mitchell said that he saw in this, an act at variance with the principles of constitutional, representative and responsible government. He implied that the interview had been arranged so that pressure could be brought to bear upon the Manitobans to induce them to recede from their position on the railway question. Sir John effectually disposed of Mr Mitchell's language by stating that the Government knew nothing about his Excellency having sent for the two gentlemen, and then with a twinkle in his eye he added that the Government could not prevent the Governor General or the Queen from talking to anyone whom they chose. The House enjoyed a good laugh at Mr Mitchell's expense, which was renewed when Mr Laurier proceeded to rub in the rebuff by intimating that it did not matter whether Messrs Greenway and Martin saw his Excellency or not, as the Government was responsible for what was done.

The temperance question came up before the House on Tuesday last in rather an unexpected way and from an equally unexpected quarter and that from no less a personage than Mr Mills, the talkative member from Bothwell. This new-found champion of temperance and the Scott Act, instead of doing the cause any good, could not have taken a more effective method of dealing the Canada Temperance Act a more cruel stab than he has done. For years past the prohibitionists in the House, Reform and Conservative alike, have been in hearty concert to further the objects of the Dominion Alliance, but it looks as if the compact were now broken. Just at the time when the Dominion Alliance was in session here, trying to devise means to further the prohibition cause, Mr Mills, who has never been noted for a superabundance of temperance zeal, springs a motion on the House which, if adopted, would have been one of direct want of confidence for the Ministry. The sage of Bothwell is now probably regretting his lack of wisdom in attempting to make the prohibition question a party one; but one thing is sure, it has proved beyond a doubt, that, owing to the Liberal Government's not having a regular leader, it has been the means of this party's making a mistake that will be remembered. The result has been to roll up for the Government one of its old-time majorities, besides alienating from the Reform party some of those who have sided with them, or were expected to do so. Mr Mills, on the motion of Sir Charles Tupper to go into Committee of Supplies, moved in amendment that it was the duty of the Government to submit to Parliament a measure embracing such provisions as would re-

move all legal impediments to the efficient working of the Canada Temperance Act. His observations in support of the motion he was making fell very flat. As the Premier in a brief and cogent speech pointed out, Mr Mills had utterly failed to show that there are legal impediments to the official working of the Scott Act. There were no legal impediments to its adoption in any constituency. There were no impediments against conviction. If a man infringed the Act penalties could be imposed and men could be sent to jail under it. The chief point Sir John laid down was that this was not a political question but a moral one, and should so be treated, and yet Mr Mills has by his actions designedly plunged the question into the arena of party politics. Mr Jamieson, who, as an earnest advocate of prohibition principles in Parliament, had a right to be heard on the subject, was listened to attentively. He characterized Mr Mills' course as a distinct breach of agreement which had hitherto existed among the temperance men in Parliament, that they should act in unison on the prohibition question. Other speakers strongly deprecated what was transparently nothing more nor less than a political move.

A discussion is quietly going on among members of the Commons relative to the best means of obtaining greater security against bank issue. It is not probable however that any legislation on the subject will be laid before Parliament this session. The bank charters expire in 1892, so that there is plenty of time to consider the question in all its details. A moment's reflection will show that it is in the highest degree undesirable that the powers given to the various banks should be restricted before their charters expire, as such a course might injuriously affect the value of Canadian bank stocks in the estimation of foreign investors. It is most probable that the Standing Committee on Banking and Commerce will be invited this session to strike a sub-committee of experts to lay the foundations of an inquiry, the results of which may be utilized in the session of 1889. Some members of the House are in favor of a system of Government bank inspection, but a few members more than ordinarily familiar with banking and financial matters from upon any movement looking in that direction. They urge—and there would seem to be considerable force in their argument—that the ramifications of the banking system are so many that it would be almost impossible to provide the general public with a sure guarantee against loss.

The papers great and small of the Reform side of politics, have endeavored to make a little political capital out of Sir John's attending the revival meetings recently held here. Then Mr Doutney, the temperance lecturer, stated at Toronto that Sir John had also banished wine from his table at Earncliffe. The last statement however is untrue. Wine is there taken for those who care to use it, but Sir John or any of his family do not partake. The statement made by Mr Doutney was a misrepresentation and exaggeration of an incidental remark made in private conversation and in reply to a question asked. Sir John and Lady Macdonald express deep regret at the use, or rather the abuse, of the answer given, for the sake of making a sensation at a temperance meeting.

My letter is now assuming such a length I must draw it nild and reserve what else I have to write about for my next. C. S. C.

Gaspereau-The Valley School.

Schools teach lessons to their pupils; some schools teach, or at least read lessons to, the outside world: the Gaspereau school does both. Gaspereau is a fertile and wealthy district: I say wealthy, for unless it is so, how could it invest the vast sums it does in banks and other securities—larger sums than do other communities which by universal consent are wealthy? Gaspereau valley has a school which properly claims a few remarks: some of these must be laudatory; others perhaps cannot with propriety be altogether favorable. The custom that has prevailed with but few exceptions for years has been to employ a female teacher for the summer months, and a male teacher with sometimes additional assistance for the winter. This custom has partly at least grown out of another, which obtains in the village—namely the employment of the boys during the summer in agricultural pursuits. The result is that only girls and little boys are in attendance at school throughout the year. Another result is that the girls enjoy more school-teaching than the boys; and as the teaching has sometimes been of a very creditable character, they are well advanced in their studies. It follows that the larger boys of the village are not generally so far advanced as the girls, and that but few of them can make much pretension to school education.

I would here venture to ask the parents whether there is not an error in this arrangement? whether, indeed, there is not a serious defect in it? If they want their daughters to be better educated than their sons, they are consistent in giving them better advantages; otherwise they should adopt a different method of procedure. I have implied in my previous remarks that the elder girls of the school are very creditably advanced in their studies. In English grammar and analysis, as well as in arithmetic, geometry and algebra they hold a very favorable rank; indeed they are unquestionably in advance of the pupils of some schools of much higher pretensions at no great distance. An exercise in English grammar at which I was lately present may be briefly

described as a sample of the work done by the first class of the school. A stanza of ten pentameter verses, which none of them had ever seen, was given them for analysis—an extemporaneous exercise, as it might be called. One of the class was asked to place it, as read, on the black board. This was done so rapidly and as neatly as any one could wish black-board work to be done: it reminded me of the work of Principal Mackay at the session of the Summer School of Science—lately held in Wolfville; and every one who was present on that occasion knows how skilfully he performed the task and how beautiful was its execution.

The stanza to which I have referred was placed on the board with only one mistake and that a very slight one, which was corrected as soon as made without assistance. From an unusual word of eleven letters one had been omitted in the hurry of writing but of the four hundred or so others all were correct. What made the performance the more creditable was that the black-board could only be called "black" by courtesy, and was otherwise not very fit to write on; and that the fingers had to do duty as erasers, there being no appliance of the kind at command; but the performer had learned by experience to overcome and disregard all such impediments; and so completely had she acquired the lesson, that she did not seem to be aware that any obstacle existed. The exercise in analysis was as satisfactory and commendable as that in diction. If it might be allowed again to digress, I would suggest to the trustees and all concerned, that the school is worthy of a more attractive room than it possesses. The room might have answered fifty years ago, but during the last fifty years the world has been advancing, and in nothing more than in schools and schoolhouses. One could not truthfully say that the Gaspereau schoolhouse was like the Indian's gun: "it needed a new lock, a new stock and a new barrel"; for it has one of the three good qualities represented by the words quoted. The other two might, I conceive, be very advantageously supplied at the earliest date possible; and it would joy.

I will touch upon only one point more. The Gaspereau school has sometimes had the reputation of being a rather disorderly one, but it cannot properly lay claim to that distinction now. During the examination of three classes, one in Latin, one in English analysis, and one in geometry, there was no interruption whatever, or anything to distract attention; so that if the boys do not attend school during the summer, still they know how to conduct themselves when at school. If there should ever be any danger of forgetfulness, a hint from their painstaking teacher, Mr Reid, would at once put all things to rights. March 15th, 1888. VICTOR.

How Can We Enforce The Scott Act?

DEAR EDITOR.—We have now had the Scott Act in force in this county for some seven years, but as yet we have done little in the way of effectually enforcing it. Why I cannot tell, but probably we have not taken the proper steps to get the temperance people aroused to the fact that they, and they alone, are responsible that the Act is not as rigidly enforced as it is in other parts of our Dominion.

The first attempt to carry out the provisions of the Act was made by a committee of seventy members, appointed by a public meeting held at Berwick on July 7th, 1881. This committee, which conducted quite a number of prosecutions and was successful in collecting several fines, merged into the King's Co. Temperance Alliance which was formed in September 1885. This society still exists, but somehow the temperance people seem to have little confidence in it, and but few of its own members take the trouble to attend its meetings.

Probably the cause of the failure of these organizations is the fact that neither can be called strictly representative bodies, as they were largely self-appointed and were responsible to no one but themselves. To remedy this I would suggest that a convention be called, to be composed entirely of delegates appointed by the several temperance organizations, and that it take charge of all temperance work which cannot be done by their respective societies. We would then have a thoroughly organized working body, the members of which would represent the views, and be responsible to, the local societies which appointed them.

There is much to be done before the election of municipal councillors in November next; and unless we have an organization which will command the respect of, and be able to unite all our forces, we will find our next council composed of members more strongly opposed to us than the present one is, and the result will be free run for another two years. I trust that others interested in temperance work will give their views on this matter and that some definite action will be taken at an early date. PURN WATER.

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