

The Colonist.

FRIDAY, JULY 10, 1891.

WILFULLY BLIND.

The Times says that it cannot believe that the "Colonist is ignorant of Section 46 of the School Act, which defines the duties of school trustees, one of which is to see that the school is conducted according to the rules and regulations." We are not ignorant of the Section to which our contemporary refers, and it is precisely because we are not that we maintain that the trustees have nothing whatever to do, directly or indirectly, with any dispute that may arise between the Principal of the High School and the Superintendent of Education respecting the manner in which the examinations have been conducted. The duties of the trustees related chiefly to the care of school property and to providing the school with fuel, furniture, and such other things as were necessary to keep them in good working order. The complaint with the trustees themselves all along has been that, with the exception of engaging and dismissing teachers, they were wholly without authority in matters relating to the management of the schools. Section 46, however, contains this clause: "To visit from time to time, each school under their (the trustees) charge, and to see that it is conducted according to the authorized regulations, and that such school is duly provided with a register." The reader sees that not one single word is said here about examinations or promotions or disputes between the Superintendent and the Principal. Let us now turn to the rules and regulations, to see what there is in them about examinations requiring the supervision of the Trustees. Here is rule 8 as it is printed in the rules and regulations for the government of the public schools of British Columbia. It is the only one which treats of examinations:

"8. On the last day of each half-year (unless otherwise arranged by the Department) to hold a public examination of his school, of which notice shall be given to the Trustees and to the parents through the pupils."

Provided, however, that in the cities of Nanaimo, New Westminster and Victoria, the semi-annual examinations shall be held during the last week of each session, as follows:

Girls' school, Wednesday.
Boys' school, Thursday.
High school, Friday.

Provided also that in the city of Vancouver the semi-annual examinations shall be held during the last week of each session as follows:

West school, Tuesday.
East school, Wednesday.
Central school, Thursday.
High school, Friday.

The public examinations of the Ward Schools shall be held alternately during the forenoon of the above mentioned days, and if rendered necessary by the establishment of additional Ward Schools, on other days of the last week of each session.

"Each teacher in these cities shall be required to attend the other public examinations held after the closing of his school."

It will be observed that the parenthesis in the first paragraph of this regulation shows that the examinations are completely under the control of the Department. But what we wish particularly to direct attention to is, that all that the Trustees have to do with reference to these examinations is to see that they are held on the proper days. Not one word is said in the regulation about the manner in which the examinations are to be conducted, who is to correct the papers for the pupils, or who is to correct them and estimate their value. This is the matter in dispute between the Superintendent and the Principal, and this is the matter on which the rules and regulations are wholly silent. Consequently, if the Trustees had anything at all to do with the examinations, which, in our opinion, is doubtful, they had, certainly, nothing to do with respect to the way in which they were carried on. But, according to the interpretation of the Times itself, the Trustees went outside their powers when they entertained Mr. McLeod's complaint.

It was their duty, the Times says, "to see that the school is conducted according to the rules and regulations," but, as we have seen, there is not a single word in the rules and regulations about the mode of conducting the examinations, therefore they have nothing whatever to do with the disputes and misunderstandings relative to that subject. Mr. McLeod evidently sees the weakness of the Times case, and, to make it appear stronger, quotes a sentence from the Superintendent's report, as if remarks made by the Superintendent are authoritative and have the effect of law, or of rules and regulations formally approved and sanctioned by the Government. The Superintendent certainly stated in his report that "He (the Principal) must also prepare the questions for the promotion examinations."

But, according to Mr. McLeod's complaint, the Superintendent thought proper to relieve him of that onerous task. That he had the power to do so, everyone must see who reads sub-section 6 of section 15 of "An Act respecting Schools," which specifies the duties of the Superintendent. Here is the text of that sub-section in full:

"(6) To examine and enquire into, from time to time, the progress of the pupils in learning, the order and discipline observed, the system of instruction pursued, the mode of keeping the school registers, the average attendance of pupils, the character and condition of the buildings and premises, and give such advice as he may judge proper."

The reader will notice that the means to be taken to conduct this examination and enquiry are not specified. It would be a physical impossibility for him to do all the work himself, and the law leaves him at liberty to adopt any method which he deems most effective. If the Principal of the High School believes that the means adopted by the Superintendent were not fair to him or his pupils, it is clear that the proper

course for him to take was to make his complaint to the Superintendent's official superiors. This is what common sense dictates, and this is what must recommend itself to every right-minded man's sense of justice. Nothing can be more unfair to the Superintendent than to prefer his complaint before a Board of Trustees, who have no jurisdiction in the matter, and have an *ex-parte* statement published, garnished with senseless but malignant personalities in a partisan newspaper. The Principal can get no redress from the Trustees, and the Times desires nothing better than to have an excuse for vilifying and misrepresenting the Department of Education. If Mr. McLeod does not want to obtain a "temporary gratification of injured feelings," if he is not actuated by "a desire for revenge," what does he want and what are his desires? The Trustees, as he knows, can do nothing for him; the malice and the foolishness of the Times can do him no good, and he either neglects or refuses to go to the only tribunal that has power to adjudicate upon his case and to do him justice if he has been treated unjustly.

A FISHERY COMMISSION.

We are glad to learn that the Government now evince a disposition to set upon the suggestion to appoint a Board of Commissioners to enquire into the way in which the salmon fishery of the province is conducted, to find out, we presume, what is required for its proper regulation. There can have been for a long time asking for a Commission composed of competent, impartial and unprejudiced men, who could frame or suggest regulations for the Fraser River fishery, suited to the "conditions" under which that business is carried on. We could never see why that very reasonable request was not promptly complied with. Eastern men are altogether unacquainted with the way in which salmon are caught and packed in British Columbia. There is no similar fishery on the other side of the continent, nor, indeed, in the world. It is not to be expected that a fishery of this kind could be properly regulated by men who never saw the Fraser river, and who live thousands of miles from where the salmon are caught. When, after considerable delay, an official of the department was sent to the Fraser, he conducted his enquiry in such a manner as to convince British Columbians that he had no idea of the importance and intricacy of the matter he was sent to enquire into. If intelligent and observant men, who have for many years been engaged in the salmon fishery, find that they still have much to learn, both with regard to the habits of the salmon and the best methods of catching and packing them, what is to be thought of the official, who imagined he "knew it all" after being on the river for two or three days? Knowledge that he would be anything is not matched in that way. Besides, Mr. Wilnot was so well satisfied with his own powers of observation and with the infallibility of his own judgment, that he entered into no formal enquiry at all. When the result of his flying visit to the Fraser River was seen, we are not surprised that men like the Board of Trade's Committee characterized his report in terms that are so scathingly severe.

It is to be hoped that the Commission will be composed of men who will enter into the enquiry with open minds, and who will, after he has made a full investigation, be able to form just and reasonable conclusions from the evidence they have heard and the facts they have collected. A judiciously selected committee who will do their work carefully and well will render this province a most valuable service.

A FREE TRADE DEBAT.

New South Wales, as most of our readers are aware, has long been a free trade colony. In matters of trade and finance it made the Mother Country its model. There was a constant rivalry between that colony and Victoria, which is intensely protectionist.

Comparisons were being continually made between the two colonies for the sake of showing the superiority of one system over the other. The free traders declared that the progress of New South Wales was a striking example of the soundness of free trade principles, and the protectionists pointed to the growth and prosperity of Victoria to prove that the protectionist system is the one better calculated to advance the prosperity of the country.

The issue, free trade or protection, was, the other day, submitted at a general election to the people of New South Wales themselves, and they, after many years experience of free trade, decided in favor of protection. The labor question, too, was an element of the contest. If the laboring class in Australia are, as is contended in Canada, ardent disciples of Henry George, the labor vote would have gone to strengthen the free trade party. But it evidently did not. The Opposition (Protectionist) elected fifty-seven members, the Ministerialists (Free Trade), fifty-one; the Labor Party, twenty-six; and the Independents, three. When the parties are divided on the economic question, the Protectionists number seventy-five and the Free Traders sixty-two, giving the Protectionists a majority of thirteen.

This result is a sore blow and a great discouragement to the cause of free trade. It was believed by many that the effects of free trade in New South Wales were so conspicuously more beneficial than those of protection in Victoria that the Victorians would, sooner or later, change their policy and become free traders. But, as our readers see, the reverse has been the case. The change in New South Wales will most probably make the work of confederating the Australian colonies easier. The other

colonies are all, more or less, protectionist, and the free traders of New South Wales have an obstacle in the way of their coming to an agreement as to the trade policy to be pursued by the new Commonwealth. Some wanted a policy of protection to be made permanent by the Constitution, but the conversion of New South Wales will probably reconcile the colonies to adopt the more sensible plan of leaving the fiscal policy to be decided by the parliamentary majority of the time being.

IN ITS TRUE COLORS.

The Times has abandoned the contention that the Trustees could deal with the matter in dispute between the Superintendent of Education and the Principal of the High School. It has found out that it did not understand either the School Act or the Rules and Regulations. It has, at last, thrown off all disguises and all pretences, and it impudently proceeds to try the Superintendent, having heard only one side of the case, and it coolly asks us to join it in the iniquitous and indecent work it has undertaken. What can be more iniquitous and indecent than to condemn a man unheard? The Times, too, makes itself utterly ridiculous in undertaking to consider and adjudicate upon. A cap and bells and a coat of motley is the proper garb for such a judge. There is a competent and constitutional tribunal before which Mr. McLeod's complaint can be made. The Times scornfully repudiates that tribunal on the ground of alleged partiality. It is, our contemporary contends, prejudiced against Mr. McLeod and will not treat him fairly, and then, after having said any number of unjust and malicious things against the Superintendent of Education, it solemnly mounts the judgment seat and calls upon the parties to appear before it. Even if the Superintendent were weak and foolish enough to acknowledge the authority of his self-constituted judge what kind of treatment could he expect from a review from a journal which has made itself judge, jury, counsel and accuser all in one? If ever a newspaper made a fool of itself the Times has done so in this matter. It has not had the sense or decency to wait until Mr. McLeod's complaint had been heard and pronounced upon by the proper authority, but has denounced the Government before an opportunity was afforded it of taking action in the premises, and condemned the Superintendent without having heard what he has to say for himself. The organ of the Opposition has been both foolish and malignant in this business. Whether it has been more foolish than malignant, or more malignant than foolish, it is hardly worth while to enquire.

A LAW-ABIDING COMMUNITY.

We are glad to see that the measures taken by the Government of the State of Washington to put a stop to disorder, and to preserve the peace, promise to be followed by the best results. The authorities were rather slow in moving, but when they did take action they were resolute and energetic. They had, too, as we knew, the great majority of the people on their side. The promoters of disorder in that State did not know how weak they were until the disturbances at the coal mines became serious. As soon as the people were convinced that the dispute between the miners at work and the miners out of work would lead to disorder, in which life and property would be in danger, they with one voice demanded that they should be dismissed. The press, of both parties, gave favorable expression to the general feeling. The following article from the Seattle Telegraph is a specimen of how the question was treated by the respectable press of the State. It said:

"It is not a question whether this or that gang of armed men is willing to give up its arms. There is no need of parlaying with these mobs, for in all they are, no matter what they call themselves or are called by their employers. The State is not to make treaties with these law-breakers. The governor has given plain instructions that they must lay down their arms, or be dismissed by the militia. The State's authority must be promptly recognized and obeyed or enforced. If necessary, martial law can be proclaimed in the disaffected regions until obedience is secured. If necessary, force must be employed, and whoever resists or encourages resistance will invite destruction. Any individuals or gangs who put themselves in an attitude of rebellion against the authority of the commonwealth should be summarily dealt with."

Those who counselled violence or countenanced violence found themselves nowhere. The men who sympathized with the strikers were as loud in demanding that the law be enforced and peace maintained as were those who sided with the employers. The consequence was that the disturbances ceased, and both the men and employers began to think how an amicable settlement could be made. The negotiations, it is pleasant to find, are likely to be successful and the prospect is that the labor troubles in the State of Washington will soon come to an end.

A GOOD MEASURE.

We are glad to see that the Government has decided to give the people of the Northwest Territories a greater measure of self-government. Men of the Anglo-Saxon race cannot be kept long in leading strings. As soon as they feel their freedom curtailed and their liberty of action restricted, they become restive, and even when no great inconvenience is felt and no injury done they grow grumpy and become exceedingly hard to manage. It stands to reason, too, that the settlers in the Northwest are better able to manage their own affairs than the officials of the Department of the Interior. Their Government should be responsible to them, and the will of the majority

of their representatives should prevail. There are important questions which the people of the Northwest should be allowed to decide for themselves without dictation from Ottawa or anywhere else. The school question, the prohibition question, the language question, the question of the expenditure of public monies, all demand immediate settlement, and it is of great importance that they should be settled in accordance with the will of the people themselves. If the Hon. Mr. Dewdney's bill is really as liberal as we are led to conclude from the report of our Ottawa correspondent, and if it is suited to the present condition of the Territories, he will not only do much to advance the interests of that part of the Dominion, but he will take a higher rank among Dominion statesmen. He is now laying the foundation of what all believe will become a large and influential commonwealth, and if his measure does justice and promotes harmony now, and prevents difficulties and disagreements hereafter, its introduction will be regarded as one of Canada's greatest benefactions.

A PRACTICAL STATESMAN.

The advocates of Imperial Federation have hitherto prided themselves on being indefinite and unpractical. They have invariably dealt in generalities which have not always been glittering, and the picture which they have drawn of the future of the Empire has been so dim and indistinct that ordinary people can make neither head nor tail of it. The Federated Empire is therefore still without form and void, and it has remained in this chaotic condition so long that very many doubt whether it is possible to give it shape and to make it practicable. Notwithstanding the general euphemism and the almost universal demand for something practical, the Federationists, great and small, boast that they have no out and dried scheme to offer the people of Great Britain and her dependencies.

It is difficult to see what virtue there is in advocating a scheme, year after year, of which its promoters dare not venture to say anything practicable or definite. Lord Salisbury seems to be of this opinion, for two or three weeks ago, in reply to a deputation of the Imperial Federation League who waited upon him "to urge the convocation at the earliest timely date of a conference of the self-governing countries of the Empire, to consider the question of securing to them a real and effective share in the privileges and responsibilities of a united Empire, under conditions which are consistent with the present political constitution of the United Kingdom, and with the self-government possessed by the colonies," he said:

"I quite think that no grave decision in reference to the relations between the colonies of this country ought to be taken, or could be taken, without personal consultation with the statesmen who guide the colonies in those matters. But I would venture to lay down, also, as a maxim, that we could not call them to their momentous associations to put them to all the difficulty, and all the labor, and all the cost of coming to this end of the world, unless we are prepared to lay before them, for discussion, some definite scheme of our own. I do not say such a scheme that we must adopt it with a resolution not to recede from it, but it is not to be an unalterable determination, but I think it would be a frivolity, almost amounting to an insult, to ask those statesmen to come together, here, without any definite idea of what ought to be done, and to ask them to consider a scheme which would generate ill-feeling from the contact of so many distinguished minds. We must venture to treat foreign countries in such a way. If you summoned a conference you have always some proposition to make to that conference; you may not be certain that you will carry it; you may be prepared to make great concessions, great modifications; but it would be an insult to those who come to the conference, and no proposition to make to them when they come—and I think the courtesy which, in this matter, is due to foreign countries, is due to our colonies as well. May I venture to these one further remark, which has been suggested to me by this debate? Lord Brassey, and I think several speakers, rather claimed it as a virtue on the part of the society, that they had got out and dried scheme to propose, and that they had no proposition to make to them when they come—and I think the courtesy which, in this matter, is due to foreign countries, is due to our colonies as well. May I venture to these one further remark, which has been suggested to me by this debate? 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