

The English Education Question.

SPEECH OF MR. BLAKE.

London, May 9.—Speaking in the course of the great debate on the Education Bill to-night in the House of Commons, Mr. Blake said: I may excuse myself for addressing the House by saying that I happen to have a somewhat prolonged experience upon this subject. For forty sessions, in three Legislatures, in different countries, I have witnessed and taken some part in the discussion of problems which arise in their concrete form by the association of a Protestant majority with a Roman Catholic minority. Long ago I found and took my ground upon general principles, and having adhered to that ground I was rather pained when I heard from the lips of the Minister of Education the other day a statement with reference to

the State. He seemed to have forgotten that, after all, the parent is a member of the State, and has contributed to the taxes of the State (cheers), has contributed to the rates and that it is out of his taxes and his rates that the State is maintaining the system of education, whatever it may be, which is made compulsory upon the parent. He calls not for a subsidy, but claims that he shall be assisted to perform the duty which the State has made compulsory and which the State has undertaken to perform according to its own fashion. In the debate of 1902 my hon. friend, the member for East Mayo, made

A COURAGEOUS AND MEMORABLE SPEECH.

He then pointed out that as an inevitable consequence of the measure a share of the public control would be demanded, and would be obtained, as the result of the system of public and compulsory education propounded in the Bill. The hon. member for East Mayo proposed an amendment in the direction of parental rights, but his voice was not listened to by those for whose interests the Bill of 1902 was passed. But, nevertheless, his voice spoke the truth, for we are now face to face with the position which has been rendered inevitable by concrete facts. A situation was created by the Bill of 1902 which has to be met and dealt with to-day, and therefore the hon. member for East Mayo's views has to-day been verified. It was, however, not so much the simple proposition, but it is the extent, the character, and the methods of interference and the inadequacy of the safeguards, in respect of which, we believe, the Bill is fundamentally vicious, and will trench unwarrantably on the rights of the minority for whom we speak. I am going to confine my remarks to some of the aspects of Clause 4 and the proposed alteration to a compulsory form which the right hon. gentleman deprecated most emphatically, while at the same time he averred that he did not believe it would make a difference in a single school, which meant that in every school area the clause would be put into operation. If it would be put into operation voluntarily what objection is there to making it clear and plain? If that is going to happen everywhere why not make it the law? We are strongly of opinion that it is essential to the security of the minority, which in various parts of the country will have to fight these battles under the protection of this clause that

THAT PROTECTION SHOULD BE MADE ABSOLUTELY OPERATIVE.

We believe this to be no less important to the whole community. We believe that to leave the question whether that clause should come into force or not, to the judgment of each Council or Local Authority which under the clause is to exercise judgment upon the question, would be to throw into the hands of the bigots and zealots and those who delight in religious controversy a firebrand ready to hand to be used for local purposes, for local elections, and this would create difficulties of all descriptions. Nothing could be more injurious to the peace of those communities than to leave this as a wholly permissive clause. In my own country of Canada after struggles of the most desperate character, involving the greatest extremity of bitterness between religious denominations and disturbing the general peace and progress of the country and all political combinations, I rejoice that an agreement was made between those provinces, under which

THE OVERWHELMING CATHOLIC MAJORITY

of one province agreed to respect the rights and sentiments of the minority by making equal laws for each. It was agreed that that should be made a fundamental element of the Constitution. I agree that there are not the same elements of finality. Such as you have you had better use,

and the first of these elements is to determine the initial question, and we know that it means that in the cases in which you determine that there ought to be the right given in certain circumstances that it shall be given. There is the suggested objection that there may be on some of the Local Committees cranks who will object, but whatever strength there is in that argument is infinitesimal compared with the evil of SENDING IT AS A FIREBRAND to the country and the bitter struggles which what you have proposed will create. Do what you think is right, and if you think this is not a right clause then reject it, but if you think it is right and just to the Roman Catholic minority that there should be such a provision, then use all your power to enact it. The view which the President of the Board of Education expressed in introducing this Bill rather added to than relieved my disquietude when the clause was read first, because he said: "I admit it is asking these minorities to trust in the generosity, the equitableness, and the fairness of the local authority." I daresay in many cases that will be justified, but I know not how far those other compliments to which I have referred may arise. The right hon. gentleman said: "Public opinion would view any obstructive withholding of the permissive privilege." What public opinion? The public opinion of the locality? If so, then the difficulty would not arise. Does he mean the public opinion of the public at large to be made operative by discussion in this House and another Act of Parliament? We know the difficulty of passing

AN ACT OF PARLIAMENT TO PROTECT A CATHOLIC MINORITY

against a Protestant majority, and it would not be very readily operative. The right hon. gentleman went on to say: "But they might truly say that it is left to their judgment, even in the case of a four-fifth majority whether or no, and, therefore, in canvassing, in election, in discussion each rural area has this question in its own hands." The right hon. gentleman also pointed out that although he believed in justice and generosity, the question was really in their own hands, and that it was for them in their own individual cases and with reference to their own community to judge and decide. Those difficulties that I felt and which I now entertain have been assuaged in one sense by the right hon. gentleman's speech to the Jewish deputation, in which he said: "Assuming the provisions of Clause 4 with reference to non-provided schools to be illusory (and, of course, if they were illusory they would benefit more largely than any other body, but it was pointed out that it was not a complete protection, because it was not obligatory on the local authorities to ascertain the facts." So far the right hon. gentleman is accurate. The right hon. gentleman has imposed the duty upon the local authorities to make local inquiry for the purpose of ascertaining the facts—namely, the percentage of persons of one persuasion as compared with another. "If four-fifths of the parents of the children desire facilities it was an obligation upon the local authorities." These are ambiguous words. I don't know what obligation the right hon. gentleman means. "Of course," said Mr. Birrell, "the local authority, if so minded, might disregard the fair intention of the statute and obstinately hold aloof from doing anything further." Now, sir, the right hon. gentleman acknowledges that may happen. He has described his interpretation of the statute. It is the fair intention of the statute in any case in which the conditions prescribed by the Fourth Clause are found to exist, the local authority shall agree, then

WHAT IS THE DIFFICULTY

in saying that they shall agree? (Irish cheers). "He would take care," added Mr. Birrell, "that their view that a statutory obligation should be imposed upon the local authority to do its duty was put before his colleagues," and he went on to point out that there was some difficulty in dealing with local authorities, and he did not know what the remedy would be, and so on. If

the right hon. gentleman, with all the authority he has, and all the authority he may ask Parliament to invest him with—if this Imperial Parliament is unable to deal with the local authorities, how does he expect the poor Roman Catholics to deal with the Protestant majority in the locality affected? Then the right hon. gentleman said: "It was hard to believe that any great local authority could be so bigoted as to disregard this statutory duty, he would not say obligation, imposed upon them for the education of the country." Well, if it is a statutory duty

LET US MAKE IT PLAIN

it is a statutory duty. That is all we ask. Make it clear that it is what the right hon. gentleman describes it to be. If it is a statutory duty then they have to perform it. The right hon. gentleman at present left it to their free decision whether they should perform it or not. "He believes that no local authority would refuse to Jews, Roman Catholics or Churchmen the full advantages of the Parliamentary grant which Parliament intended them to receive. At the same time there was considerable substance in this point, and he would give it careful consideration." I am sure that the consideration has been given to this point, and I hope that the communication which the right hon. gentleman said he would make to his colleagues has been made, and we will be greatly relieved if we learn that this clause is to be made mandatory instead of permissive. The right hon. gentleman went on to deal with the question of the teachers. I am not, at this moment, dealing with that point. I am now dealing with the question whether Clause 4 should be mandatory or permissive, and I submit to the House that in the interest of the local authorities, in the interest of the Roman Catholic minorities, in the interests of the peace of the country, it is desirable not to draw this bone of contention into every place in which the clause may be applicable; but if Parliament has decided that it is the duty of the local authorities, on certain conditions, to use the clause, to make that plain and clear by stating it in the enactment (cheers). I now come to

THE PERCENTAGE LIMIT.

The number in each school is not shown, and we have only general results, of which we can only produce the average. The only true thing to say of the average is that it does not properly represent any one actual case. We cannot tell in how many of the schools there may be a quota above or below four-fifths, and the same observation may be made of the population limit of 5000. These are considerations that require careful study before they can be exhaustively discussed. I only mention them as considerations which it is necessary to take into account before we can realize the real importance, either of the percentage limit or the population limit suggested. To my mind, and I say it at once, the percentage limit appears to be too high. Again, as to

THE EXCLUSION OF RURAL AREAS.

I see no reason for the exclusion of rural areas. There exists a provision for the necessity of establishing a convenient possibility of access to another school as an element for the application of the fourth clause, and that convenience is bound to be ascertained by the local authority. If the convenience is not available in the rural area it will exclude the rural area, just as it excludes the urban, but if it is available in the rural area, then I see no reason why the rural area should be specially excluded from the operation of the clause. It seems as if the exclusion, as well as useless. It seems

A RESTRAINT WITHOUT ANY REASON AT ALL

for it. I, at all events, see no reason for it. Then I hold that there is as necessary an element of considerable importance in the question of the census proportion. It is known that the working population of this country includes, perhaps, more than their proportion of the Irish population.

Late Rev. Patrick O'Donnell.

(By Rev. John Roe, P.P., Harbor Main, in St. Bonaventure's Adelpham.)

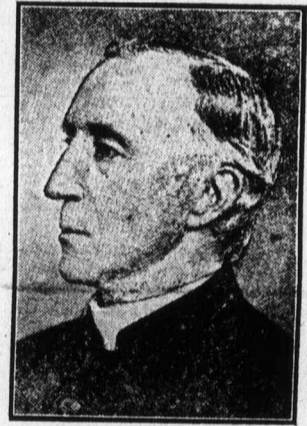
When it became known that the Rev. Patrick O'Donnell's life was ebbing fast away, and that the losing year would probably see his soul wing its flight, a wave of sympathy passed over the entire community, and his devoted friends were plunged in grief. The rev. gentleman's health had been failing for some years, but he still continued to labor on in the Master's service till death put a period to his career. It may be truly said that he died in harness—the last of the noble Old Guard—mort sur le champ d'honneur.

He breathed his last on January 16th of the current year at Dr. Jones' residence at Avondale, surrounded by friends for whom it was a labor of love to minister to his wants, both spiritual and temporal. The subject of this short obituary notice, the Rev. Patrick O'Donnell, P.P., of Harbor Main, was born of pious Catholic parents, on St. Patrick's Day, at Cahir, in the county Tipperary, Ireland, in the year 1837.

Rev. Mother Bernard of Witless Bay, Three nuns in Newfoundland also joined the religious life, besides a large number of relatives of both sexes in other countries.

Among the many virtues which adorned the priestly character of the subject of this brief sketch, devotion to the interests of others was most remarkable; he was the most unselfish of men; he never regarded his own interests; he was generous to a fault, the soul of hospitality, and therecorded angel only can number his benefactions to the poor. It is not to be wondered at, then, that, notwithstanding his forty-two years in the ministry, he died penniless, his share of this world's goods was nil.

The obsequies were held at the parish church at Harbor Main, where a large concourse assembled, many of them from distant points: Right Rev. Monsignor Walsh, V.G., P.P., Brigus, was the celebrant of the Mass; Rev. William Veitch, P.P., Conception, deacon; and Rev. John March, C.C., Harbor Grace, sub-deacon. In the sanctuary were: Ven. Archdeacon C. H. O'Neill, of



REV. PATRICK O'DONNELL.

After a preparatory training in the local schools he was sent to the famous Trappist Monastery at Mount Melleray, in the County Waterford, where he acquired that exquisite taste for ancient classical literature for which he was so remarkable, and where his young heart was guided along the paths of piety by those good masters of the spiritual life. From Melleray he graduated to St. Patrick's College, Carlow. He came to Newfoundland in 1861 and entered St. Bonaventure's College, where he completed his course, and he was ordained by the Most Rev. John Thomas Mullock, O.S.F., in 1863.

His first appointment was to the parish of Harbor Main, which then included Holyrood and Conception, and in that parish he spent almost the whole forty-two years of his missionary career. He was assigned curate to the Very Rev. Kyrnan Walsh, P.P., V.G., and he continued in that capacity till the latter's death, Sept. 4th, 1868, when one of his own brothers, Very Rev. Jeremiah O'Donnell, was appointed P.P. of Harbor Main. Father Pat., as he was affectionately called, continued curate with Father Jeremiah until the latter's retirement from active duty in 1882, when, taking charge of half the parish, he removed to Conception, whilst Rev. J. V. Donnelly, the present respected incumbent of Bay de Verde, took charge of the remaining half with a residence at Holyrood. When Father Jeremiah surrendered the parish in 1884, he retired to Conception, where he resided with Father Pat. until his death in 1891. Father Pat. was appointed P.P. of Harbor Main later on, and so continued until the date of his lamented demise, January 16th, 1906.

The O'Donnell family was remarkable for the number and excellence of the members it gave to the services of religion. There were four brothers priests: Fathers Jeremiah, Richard, David and Patrick; and two sisters nuns: the late Rev. Mother Joseph of Renewals and the present

the Cathedral, St. John's; Revs. J. McGrath, P.P., Bell Isle; J. McDermot, C.C., St. John's; C. McCarthy, C.C., Witless Bay; J. V. Donnelly, P.P., Bay de Verde; J. Murphy, P.P., Holyrood, and J. Roe, P.P., Harbor Main. Dr. Murphy acted as Master of Ceremonies. After the Communion Archdeacon O'Neill delivered an able discourse on the life and labors of the deceased. He was listened to with rapt attention; tears were shed and prayers wafted to the throne of mercy in response to the eloquent words of the preacher, as he portrayed the noble qualities of him whose soul had "crossed the bar." The absolution followed, after which the coffin was lowered to its last resting place beneath the floor of the church, beside the remains of two predecessors, Revs. Kyrnan Walsh and Jas. Browne, and all was over.

The world is round me now, but sad and single I stand amid the throng with whom I mingle; Not one of all who can be to me The bosom treasure I have lost in thee.

—Mangan. True, the Christian religion points to fairer regions, where blissful scenes await the faithful soul, where tears are dried and the miseries of life lost in the beatific vision. Yet, the aching void, the rooted sorrow too deep for utterance, remain a heritage of woe to the bereaved ones. "Not all the preaching since Adam can make death other than death." When the gentle Jesus stood before the open tomb of his friend Lazarus, his tear-dimmed eyes bespoke the sorrow which filled His Sacred Heart. And Jesus wept. A sublime passage—God weeping over His dead friend! We sorrow, then, for our dear departed, but it is not the Gentle sorrow which knows no hope—we shall meet again.

May the soul of Rev. P. O'Donnell, and all the faithful souls departed, through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.