

SECULAR EDUCATION.

An Answer to Arguments in its Support.

SPEECH BY MR. PELLETTIER.

In the course of an address to his constituents in Dorchester County recently, Mr. Pelletier, Provincial Secretary in the Government of the Province of Quebec, spoke as follows concerning the question of secular education:

I have no hesitation in saying, gentlemen, that between the system of Protestant schools and neutral schools, both being bad, the Protestant school is yet to be preferred to the neutral schools, from many points of view. In a Protestant school principles are taught to the children which Catholics do not admit. In the neutral school the child is made an atheist, and he is brought up in ignorance of God and of all those religious principles which should be inculcated into the minds of the young in order to prepare them for the battle of life. In the Protestant school the children are taught what we Catholics believe to be errors, but they teach at least that there exists a God whom all should adore and to whom all should pray. The child is led into error in the manner of practising this belief in God, that he or she is directed towards altars before which, in our opinion, they should kneel, but they are taught at least that their heart and their intelligence should regulate their existence, in view of a future and immortal life. At each day they should bow the head under the beneficent influence of prayer, because faith and prayer are the two grand qualities of man. In the neutral school, where all religion is banished, doubt, scepticism, and incredulity are prepared, and a population grows up without religion, which is the greatest of all evils. In the Protestant school children are taught that the truths of their religion are not applicable as we understand them, but the parents can perhaps counterbalance these theories received at school and correct the errors which may have taken root. In the neutral school it is taught to the child who has prayed at home that prayer is not necessary. Religious education for the child is the accessory and necessary complement of instruction. Therefore in the neutral school this principle is reversed, or it is rendered inapplicable. It has been asked why not speak of religion to children in their family, and speak to them of other things in their schools? and to this has been added that Common schools could be established for all creeds. This is impossible for many reasons, and I will here indicate some of them.

I consider it as Utopian, as capacious for certain persons as it would be dangerous for others who see clearly in this theory of neutral schools a pretended object of harmony and of good understanding. What is the neutral school? The neutral school is what the professors, the teachers, and the books employed make it. In a province or in a section where the majority is Protestant, the teachers in a neutral school would be Protestant. Do you believe, therefore, that even in a school which is proclaimed neutral, or common, the ideas of the professor and the manner of expressing them would not have an effect upon the mind and intelligence of the child? The seed would be sown imperceptibly. The line of demarcation between what the professor is held to say and what he is really teaching being imperceptible and impossible to trace, it would be in vain for the Catholic minority to complain on perceiving it. In vain the Catholics would say to the Protestant



James E. Nicholson.

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majority in such a school that the professor made allusions which wounded our feelings, which would wound our conscience, and which are erroneous for our children. Do you think that in this case the Protestant majority would hasten to dismiss the teacher against whom such complaints were made? In a word this Utopia, neutral schools, would be a farce if it was not an infamy.

On the other hand, is it possible, is it practicable, in every case to limit the religious education of a child to the home circle? Is it sufficient for the child to kneel before its mother and recite the prayer it has learned, or is it sufficient for the child to sing its religious hymn upon awakening? Is this all the place religion should occupy in the young life? But, it is said, is it not possible that after hours of class the religious education of the child be given at home? The hours of labor for the child are limited. When the child has been absorbed during all this part of the day which is given over to labor by strange studies, should this feeble being, who has need for growth and development, rest and recreation, be obliged on leaving the godless school to sacrifice his necessary and legitimate recreation for a course of religious instruction? Has the mother always sufficient knowledge to give the child this course of religious instruction, not being endowed for the work, and frequently ignorant of what it is necessary to know in order to play the sacred role of teacher? And if the mother is incapable and indifferent, or if God has called her home, leaving to the father a task which for him is even more difficult than for the absent one, if this father, broken down under the labors of the day, is necessarily incapable of filling the role of teacher, if he has not the means to pay some one to replace him, what, then, will become of all these children? What will the generation be that grows up under these conditions?

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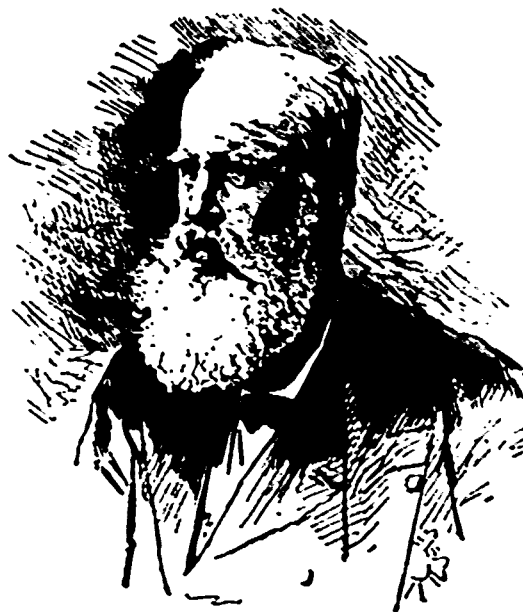
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Wheat, white, per bush.	\$0 64	\$0 64
Wheat, red, per bush.	0 61	0 61
Wheat, green, per bush.	0 60	0 60
Oats, per bush.	0 38	0 38
Barley, per bush.	0 48	0 48
Barley feed, per bushel.	0 00	0 45
Turkeys, per lb.	0 10	0 11
Dressed hogs, per cwt.	5 50	6 00
Chickens, per pair.	0 50	0 65
Geese, per lb.	0 07	0 08
Ducks, per pair.	0 60	0 80
Butter, in pound rolls.	0 18	0 20
Eggs, fresh, per doz.	0 25	0 25
Onions, per bag.	0 75	0 85
Turnips, per bag.	0 25	0 30
Potatoes, per bag.	0 60	0 65
Beans, per peck.	0 30	0 60
Peas, per bag.	0 55	0 60
Carrots, per bag.	0 35	0 40
Parsnips, per bag.	0 50	0 60
Apples, per bbl.	1 75	3 00
Hay, timothy.	12 00	14 00
Straw, shad.	7 50	8 00

AT THE CATTLE YARDS.

The following were the prices at the Western cattle yards to day:

Batchers' choice, picked, per cwt.	3 00	3 25
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Batchers' medium, " "	2 50	3 00
Bulls and mixed, " "	2 75	3 35
Milk cows, per head.	23 00	40 00

CALVES.

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" common.	2 00	4 00

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Batchers' sheep, per lb.	0 03	0 03
Lambs, choice, per pound.	0 04	0 04

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FRED WHITE,

Comptroller N. W. M. Police.

Ottawa, February, 1895.