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## THE WEEK :

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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any other person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

ONE thing must, we think, have struck the minds of most of those who try to follow the current discussion in reference to Separate Schools, in Manitoba and elsewhere. We refer to the broad difference in the modes of argument, if what is said on the side of the defence can be called argument, used by the more influential on the respective sides. There is, of course, far too much of empty and angry denunciation on both sides. But the leaders of thought among those who wish to see the Separate Schools discontinued in Manitoba and the North-West, and if possible in Ontario, discuss the question, many of them calmly, dispassionately, and simply on the merits of the unsectarian system. On the other hand, we do not think that it is any exaggeration to say that we have seen no attempt at such argument on the part of the defenders of the Separate Schools. Most of those defenders stand on their rights, the rights secured to them by the terms of capitulation, by the Quebec Act, by the British North America Act, and so forth. We do not deny that there is great force in this contention. The question of how to effect a reform of a pernicious system so engrafted into the very stock of the Constitution, without being guilty of something like bad faith, is a very difficult question, and one which must be fairly and honourably met when the proper time comes. We dismiss that, for the present, merely remarking that to suppose that there is no honest way out of the compact is to commit us to the view, from which every instinct of freedom and progress recoils, that it was within the just powers of the Government of a past generation to deprive a people of equal rights and religious equality for all time to come. Surely the dead hand must some day relax its grasp upon our liberties. But to return to our point. Have the Catholic defenders of the Separate Schools anywhere undertaken to defend the system upon its merits, as just and fair to all, and progressive? Even Archbishop Taché, from whom we should expect such a defence, if from any one, in his speech at St. Boniface, did not, so far as we are able to discover, touch upon such grounds. He dwelt upon the alleged fact, about which there is doubt, that the whole Catholic community are opposed to the

abolition of Separate Schools. He reminded his hearers of the other facts, about which there is, we suppose, no doubt, that he personally had devoted the best years of his life to the advancement of this country; that if he had ten lives he would devote them all to the service of the State; that he was a direct descendant of the first three families who had settled on the banks of the St. Lawrence; that he had been in this country before most of those who are now posing as champions of progress were born; that the agitators would find it a mistake to try to deprive the minority of their just rights, and so on. But in regard to the real question, whether the perpetuation of a system of Separate Schools, at public expense, is in the best interests of the whole people in these new communities, not a word!

THE same line of remark holds good, so far as we have observed, with reference to the French orators and press of Quebec. Expressions of determination to maintain the privileges secured by statutory compact; denunciations of the prejudice and bigotry of those who would attempt to disturb them in the enjoyment of these privileges; these we have seen in abundance. But, a calm, logical, cogent attempt to show that the present system is founded on the higher law of reason and right; or even that it is the best compromise possible under existing circumstances; this we do not remember to have seen. Is not this fact—and we appeal to our French fellow-citizens, who certainly know how to reason logically, to say whether it be not a fact—significant? We can understand their exasperation, of course, at what may seem to them an uncalled-for attempt to disturb the existing state of things. But why do they not essay to show, for example, that the dual system of public schools in Ontario or Manitoba is preferable on its merits, and produces better results than the single system which prevails, say, in New Brunswick? We all remember the fierce struggle that was made in behalf of Separate Schools in that Province. And yet, we are now assured, on the authority of a St. John newspaper, whose statement we have not seen contradicted, and which would scarcely attempt to mislead in regard to a matter in which the facts are so easily ascertained, that the priests who at one time went to prison rather than pay the school tax collectable under the non-sectarian law “are foremost in upholding now what they denounced then.” “The bishops and clergy of the Catholic Church,” says the same paper, “and the clergymen of the Protestant Church are all one on this point, and we owe a debt of gratitude to the wise men who brought about this happy state of affairs here.” It tells us, moreover, that “the bishop's brother-in-law, Dr. Travers, is now sitting along with other Catholics side by side with their Protestant brethren directing the schools, which are being taught by the members of every branch of the Christian Church, including the Catholic Sisters, out of the same books, in the Victoria and St. Joseph's, the Albert and St. Patrick's buildings.” Why should not the Catholics of Ontario and Quebec be willing at least to argue the question calmly, and consider whether a similarly happy state of affairs is unattainable in these provinces, without injustice to any race or denomination? Can it be that the reason is to be found, as so many allege, in the determination of the French of Quebec and Ontario to seek an independent national existence in Canada? And, if this is indeed the result of the special privileges that have been so long enjoyed by the people of their race and religion, can they wonder that the English-speaking and Protestant people of Canada show a disposition to arise in their might and declare that this country is and must ever remain an Anglo-Saxon and Protestant country, and that if any special institutions and privileges stand in the way of its development along these lines, some just means must be found for their removal?

LATE Winnipeg papers throw a clearer light upon the nature of the trouble between Lieutenant-Governor Royal and the North-West Assembly. Certain members of the Assembly who have been interviewed are emphatic in declaring that the bone of contention is not by any means a demand for full responsible government. That is, for the present, neither asked nor desired. The real question at issue is the old one, concerning the distribution of public money. The revenues of the Territory are

provided from two sources, but in very unequal proportions. The territorial income, derived from licenses and other local sources, is trifling, amounting only to about \$16,000 a year. This is supplemented by a subsidy voted by the Dominion Parliament of \$145,000. Last year, it appears, the Lieutenant-Governor submitted the estimates for the disposal of the whole revenue, arising from both sources, to the vote of the Assembly. Those estimates seem to have been passed without change; hence the actual question of the right of the Assembly to a voice in the distribution of the Dominion subsidy did not arise in practical form, but the members of the Assembly claim that they were led to infer, both from the Lieutenant-Governor's words and from the fact of his having submitted the whole of the estimates, that he recognized the right of the Assembly to control the appropriations. As the subsidy is voted by the Dominion Parliament in lump sums for specific purposes, as, for example, \$73,000 for schools, it is clear that the prerogative of the Assembly, if it has any, in regard to this major part of the revenue, must be limited to the matter of distribution. After the resignation of the first Advisory Board, on the ground that they could not assume responsibility for executive acts, in regard to which they were either not consulted or their advice was disregarded, Dr. Brett, on taking office, announced as the policy of the new Board, that it would “exercise the functions of an executive in matters affecting territorial finances only,” though His Honour would seek their advice in all matters of administration of public affairs, and comply, as in the past, with the recommendations of the House “in a liberal and constitutional spirit.” The issue, if this statement is correct, becomes tolerably well defined. It is, if we mistake not, the same issue, in substance, that caused the trouble some years ago between the appointed and the elected members of the former North-West council. It is highly probable that Lieutenant-Governor Royal's interpretation of the Act is correct, and that he is acting under instructions from Ottawa. At the same time it is not to be wondered at that members of the Assembly are reluctant to assume the responsibility of advisers whose advice may or may not be asked, or be acted upon when asked, as His Honour may choose, or that the Assembly should regard the submission to them of measures which they have no power to change or modify as little better than a farce. The matter will no doubt come up when Parliament meets. Meanwhile it is hard to see any good reason why the representatives of the people of the Territory should not be trusted with the distribution of the funds provided, from whatever source, for the use of the constituencies which elect them. If they are not qualified both by local knowledge and by personal character for the discharge of such a trust, the summoning of the Assembly itself must be regarded as to a large extent farcical.

ONE of the resolutions adopted by the North-West Assembly, during its late session, is unpleasantly suggestive. The resolution calls attention to the fact that no action has been taken by the Dominion Government to settle the alleged grievances of the Half-breeds, as set forth in a motion passed by the Assembly two years ago. The new resolution urges upon the Federal Government the desirability of settling the Half-breed claims with the least possible delay, as the matter is one gravely affecting the territories. The alleged claims of these old settlers are, in the opinion of the Assembly, well founded. Whether they are or not they should surely be carefully inquired into and a final decision given as soon as possible. Past painful experience should have sufficiently impressed the Ottawa Government with the unwisdom of permitting embers of dissatisfaction and unrest to smoulder until, perhaps, some second Riel may come upon the scene and fan them again into open revolt. But, apart from any such danger, the sense of justice of Ministers and Members of Parliament should be strong enough to overcome the *vis inertiae* of officialism, and secure a prompt, fair and thorough investigation.

CAN it be that the practice of polygamy is not unlawful in Canada? It is rather startling to be told by some of the newspapers that it is doubtful whether there is any law on our statute books directly forbidding it. It is