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THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JULY 28, 1854.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The *Pacific* steamer, though bringing later dates from Europe, adds nothing to our knowledge of the state of the war. "When is the fighting going to begin?"—men ask—"and is there going to be any fighting at all?" The Baltic fleet, after exchanging a shot or two with some of the defences of Cronstadt, had, according to the last accounts, withdrawn from before that fortress. In the Black Sea, the talk is of a grand combined naval and military expedition against Sebastopol; but to many it seems almost impossible that the Allies should manifest so much activity in the prosecution of hostilities. In the meantime, the Allied troops are doing nothing in Varna—the fleets are doing nothing in the Black Sea—and the Russians have not evacuated the Principalities. It may yet appear that the Allies were a little too hasty in singing their *Te Deums* for Turkish victories at Silistria. Certainly, nothing that has occurred since then has tended either to ameliorate their position, or to weaken that of the enemy. The plain state of the case is this—that the season is rapidly advancing, and that nothing has been done.

From Spain we learn that the insurrection has been suppressed, for the time; but the disaffection towards the unhappy Queen is general and deep seated. In France, and throughout the rest of the Continent of Europe, tranquillity prevails.

THE SCHOOL QUESTION.

We purpose continuing our enquiry into the causes which have hitherto prevented the development of separate Catholic schools in the Upper Province; and, by contrasting the respective clauses of the Upper and Lower Canada School Acts, we trust that we shall be able to show, how false is the assertion of Dr. Ryerson, that the law, as at present existing, secures to the Catholic minority in the Upper section of the Province, "all that is granted to the dissenting minority of any Municipality in Lower Canada—all that can be equitably asked by such minority in any Municipality of Upper Canada."

We have already shown some of the obstacles against which Catholics have to contend, in order to get their schools established. But when, in spite of Protestant Chief Superintendents, Protestant Local Superintendents, Protestant Municipal Councils, and Protestant authorities of all kinds, they have set their schools a-going, they still find themselves harassed, at every turn, by another set of annoyances, imposed upon them by our equitable and liberal Legislature. We will cite a few; and, in that similar restrictions are not imposed by law upon the Protestant minority of the Lower Province, we may logically conclude to their injustice, and rightfully call for their immediate and total repeal.

Let us first remark how carefully, in Lower Canada, the rights of the Protestant minority are protected from the possibility of any interference on the part of the Catholic majority. Any Protestant minister, though destitute of any property qualification, may be a School Trustee.—12 Vic. C. L., Sec. VI.; and all Catholic clergymen are prohibited from visiting the schools, or in any manner whatsoever interfering with the affairs of the Protestant minority. No Priest, Minister, or ecclesiastic shall be entitled to visit any School, belonging to any inhabitants not of his own persuasion, except with the consent of the Commissioners, or Trustees of such School.—9 Vic. C. 27, Sec. 25.

No such provision exists in the Upper Canada School Act. The Catholic minority of that section of the Province are denied that protection so carefully, and equitably, extended to the Protestant minority in the other. Nay! as if to make the injustice more glaring, and the sense of inferiority more galling, a Protestant minister, member of a sect notorious for its hatred of Catholicity, is appointed Chief Superintendent of Education, and is invested with absolute control over all the Catholic schools in the Province. Nor is this all. One tyrant is bad enough; one such an enemy, invested with absolute power, is sufficient; but to make matters worse, every Local Superintendent in the country, of whom many are Protestant ministers, must have his finger in the pie, whilst all clergymen, of every denomination are, *ipso facto*, School visitors in the Townships, Cities, Towns, and Villages where they respectively reside; vide, *School Act for Upper Canada*, Sec. 32.

And here is one of the grievances, of which the Catholics of Upper Canada loudly complain, (though the Methodist Chief Superintendent treats their complaints with disdain.) It is this—that the sup-

porters of separate schools in the Upper section of the Province, are compelled to address themselves, on every occasion, to the Local Superintendents; a burden from which the Protestant minority of Lower Canada are exempt, being, by law, entitled to correspond directly with the Chief Superintendent; and to receive direct from him their fair share of the School Funds. In noticing this grievance of the Catholics of Upper Canada in his official report, the Rev. Dr. Ryerson remarks—that, to grant the request of the complainants:—

"Would be placing separate schools in a different position from any other schools, would virtually exempt them from all inspection, and their returns from all enquiry as to correctness; for it is impossible that the head of the Department can know anything as to the fairness of such returns; nor would it be possible for him to devote the time and labor to perform these duties of the local superintendents; were he even able to investigate and judge of the correctness of the returns made."

In other words, Dr. Ryerson is, but too glad to devolve the duties and responsibilities of his office, upon his subalterns; and thus, at the same time, he contrives to gratify his love of ease, and his dislike to Catholic separate schools. But the futility of his reasons, assigned for not allowing the separate School Trustees to communicate directly with the head of the Educational Department, is obvious from this—that, in Lower Canada, where, as we have shown, the separate School Trustees communicate directly with the Chief Superintendent, no such evil results, as Dr. Ryerson predicts, have followed; and that Dr. Meilleur finds it quite possible to devote the time and labor requisite for the proper fulfilment of all the duties of his office. What can be done by Dr. Meilleur in Lower Canada, can be done by the Chief Superintendent of Education in the Upper Province; provided, only, that the latter functionary be equally competent, equally zealous, and equally impartial; or, in other words, provided he be not an unscrupulous and illiberal partisan, like the Methodist minister to whom our liberal Government has entrusted the educational interests of the people of Upper Canada.

It would be impossible, within the limited space at our command, to specify one-half even of the annoyances to which the Catholics of Upper Canada are exposed from this necessity of corresponding, on every trifling subject with the Protestant Local Superintendents. These gentry, "clad in a little brief authority," miss no opportunity of asserting their importance, and, if they have a chance of insulting a Catholic priest or Bishop, take care to avail themselves of it; for well they know that they can be insolent with impunity. As it is to these Local Superintendents, that application must be made by the Trustees of the Catholic separate schools for their share of the school funds, it may easily be imagined how difficult it often is for Catholics to receive from their unwilling hands the sums to which they are justly and legally entitled. The Trustees may appeal to the Chief Superintendent; the Chief Superintendent refers them to the Local Superintendents; and so, betwixt one and the other, they are tossed backwards and forwards, until at length, in despair of getting justice done, they, Catholics, however reluctantly, are compelled to abandon the attempt to sustain their separate schools, as utterly hopeless. We will give an instance, which we have from the highest authority; it will enable our readers to form some idea of the obstacles with which our co-religionists of Upper Canada have to contend.

Last year—1853—the Catholics of St. David's Ward, Toronto, were desirous of obtaining a share of the school fund for their separate school. Application, in the prescribed form, was by them made to the Protestant Board in Toronto. But the application was rejected, and an election of Catholic Trustees refused, upon the pretence, that there was a Catholic teacher in the Common School for that Ward. Dr. Ryerson, though at first strongly opposed to the claims of the Papists, was at last compelled by instructions from the Government, to direct the Board at Toronto to comply with the demands of the Catholic Trustees; and yet, in spite of that decision, up to the present day, the money due to the Catholic Separate School of St. David's Ward has not been paid.

Every one who has ever had any thing to do with public Boards, must know that the surest way of expediting business, is to communicate at once with the heads of departments. There is, besides, another reason, why it is for the advantage of our Catholic brethren in Upper Canada, that they should be allowed to communicate, on all matters, directly with the Chief Superintendent of Education; instead of being compelled to undertake a long, and almost invariably bootless, correspondence with the Local Superintendents.

The Chief Superintendent is a public officer, holding his appointment from the Governor; and is therefore responsible for his acts and decisions. If guilty of injustice, or oppression, towards us, we can at once apply to the Executive for redress; and the Catholic vote is too important for any Ministry to come to an open rupture with the whole Catholic population. We have, therefore, to a certain extent, a guarantee against any glaringly iniquitous conduct on the part of the Chief Superintendent.

The Local Superintendents, on the contrary, are entirely independent of the Executive. They are appointed by the Protestant Municipalities, upon whom they are dependent for the payment of their salaries; and well they know that the best way to ingratiate themselves with their masters, is, to exert all their influence against Catholic separate schools. It is useless for Catholics to complain—for whither should they go with their complaints? To the Executive? The Inspector, or Attorney General, with a polite bow, and a hypocritical look of great in-

terest, would assure the unhappy complainants that the Ministry had no power to interfere—that they had no authority over Municipal Councils, or Local Superintendents, as the latter did not hold their appointments from them. Shall we apply for justice to the Rev. Mr. Ryerson? He will but refer us to the Local Superintendents; Local Superintendents will, in their turn, refer us to County Municipalities, and Protestant Boards; whilst the latter will very probably give the reply that was given at Toronto to the Catholics of St. David's Ward—viz., "That they"—the said Protestant Boards—"were altogether opposed to separate schools, and that therefore Catholics should not be surprised, that they sought means to put them down."

But this is enough for the present. We have shown that—whilst in Lower Canada, no Catholic ecclesiastic can, upon any pretence, visit, or interfere with, the schools of the Protestant minority—in Upper Canada, on the contrary, every Protestant minister is a school visitor, and may claim the right, by law, of impudently meddling with the schools of the Catholic minority; and that the entire and absolute control over all schools is given to a Protestant Methodist clergyman. We have shown too, to what annoyances the Catholic minority of the Upper Province are subjected from being, by law, compelled to correspond with the irresponsible Local Superintendents; whilst, in Lower Canada, the Protestant minority have the right to correspond directly with the Chief Superintendent—a responsible Government functionary—and to receive direct from him their fair share of the school funds. We conclude therefore that what can be done in one section of the Province, can be done in the other as well; and that—as the Catholic minority of Upper Canada have the right to all that is enjoyed by the Protestant minority in Lower Canada—we have the right to demand, that Catholic schools be exempted from all visits by Protestant ministers—that the situation of Chief Superintendent be no longer conferred on a Protestant minister—and that Catholic Separate School Trustees be allowed to communicate directly with the Chief Superintendent. We shall return to the subject next week.

Our thanks are due to the *Toronto Leader*, for pointing out, more clearly than we had already done, the ruinous consequences to Catholic separate schools in Upper Canada, which must ensue from Mr. Hincks's Bill for secularising the "Clergy Reserves."

We had said that, from the composition of the County Municipalities—to whom Mr. Hincks proposes to hand over the funds accruing from the "Reserves"—and from their well known hostility to Catholics, and Freedom of Education, it was morally certain that, of the funds at their disposal, and devoted to school purposes, the Catholic separate schools would get little or none; but that the whole of these would be devoted to the building up of a system of State-schoolism, condemned by the Church as "altogether dangerous," and from which Catholics therefore would find themselves altogether excluded.

We had merely said that the County Municipalities would not give of the funds at their disposal for the use of Catholic separate schools. The *Toronto Leader* shows, from the wording of Mr. Hincks's Bill, that it has been carefully drawn up, so as to render it absolutely impossible for these Municipalities to give one penny thereof to Catholic schools, even if they were so disposed. Every farthing, devoted to educational purposes at all, must go to the Protestant schools, which will thus be enabled to defy all competition. The following is the article in the *Leader*, which we beg our friends to read attentively; remembering that by "sectarian," are meant Catholic separate schools. It is headed:—

"MISREPRESENTATION OF THE RESERVES BILL."

"When the Clergy Reserves Bill, now before the electors, was first mentioned to some of the Liberal members, they enquired, what safeguard it would contain to prevent the Municipal Councils from applying the funds to sectarian purposes, if they would so determine? The simple reply was, that the prohibition to make such a use of the monies was contained in that provision which restricted their use to the purposes for which municipalities might legally raise money; that these purposes were none of them sectarian, and that consequently there could be no sectarian application of the funds. The answer was satisfactory. Subsequently a like question was raised, in a more dogmatic form, in certain resolutions of the Episcopal Methodists. And now this statement, erroneous as it is, is passed off by the *Examiner* as undoubted truth. That journal, descending upon the thousand villainies which beset the disordered imagination of its editor, thus assures the public that, to vote for the Reserves Bill of the Government, will be to vote for giving the money to sectarian schools."

"But even were we able to regard the Bill as the proposal of honest and patriotic men, still we should question the wisdom of some of its provisions. It is, for instance, proposed to place the Reserves' money at the disposal of the Municipal Councils, to be applied to any purposes for which local taxation can be now enforced by them. Now, among these purposes, we find the support of Common Schools; and so far as this is concerned, all enlightened Liberals would rejoice in such an appropriation of the money. But thanks to the treachery of our rulers, both Tories and Reformers, there are also *Sectarian Schools*, Popish or Episcopal, which claim Municipal support, and which might demand a share of these funds, so perpetuating under another shape the very evil and annoyance so long and so justly complained of."

"This statement is equally positive and equally false. If the writer had taken the trouble to look at the statute so learnedly interpreted, he would have seen that no money raised by municipal assessment can be applied to sectarian schools. The fourth section of the Act of last Session, Supplementary to the Common School Act, provides how the funds for supporting separate schools are to be raised, and in what monies such schools shall share, adding:—'and no in any school money raised by local municipal assessment.' Can anything be more explicit than this? The Re-

serve Secularisation Bill provides that the Municipal Councils, among whom the money is to be distributed, may apply the funds to any purpose for which they can legally raise money. The Supplementary School Act provides that municipalities cannot raise money for sectarian schools."—*Toronto Leader*.

This sets the question at rest, as to how far Catholics should be aiding and abetting in the passing of a measure, which, as interpreted by its authors, will have the effect of placing large funds at the disposal of the common, or Protestant schools of Upper Canada; but which, at the same time, carefully and effectually guards against the possibility of Catholic, or separate schools, receiving therefrom a single penny; although if the "Clergy Reserves" be secularisable at all, they are public property, the property of Catholics, as well as of Protestants.

We thank the *Leader*, too, for his frank and explicit exposition of Ministerial policy. We have long suspected that all Ministerial professions of liberality towards Catholics were but sham; now we are fully convinced of it, and recognise in Mr. Hincks's Bill a cleverly prepared measure for the overthrow of Catholic separate schools. To have attacked these schools openly might have been hazardous; and would certainly have lost the present Ministers the support of every honest Catholic voter, both in the Upper and Lower Provinces. But, by this "Clergy Reserves" Bill, these schools will be as effectually crushed, as if they had been prohibited by Statute; whilst the Ministers trust to escape that odium which they would have incurred by a more direct attack upon our rights. The dodge is certainly very clever, if not very honorable.

Amongst the reasons assigned by the *True Witness* for opposing the Ministerial plan of dealing with the "Reserves," its ruinous effects upon our Catholic schools have always occupied a prominent place. Always have we treated the School question and the Reserves question, as so intimately connected, that, for all practical purposes they may be considered one and the same question. Secularisation of the Reserves means, in fact, the destruction of Catholic separate schools; and the virtual repeal of the XIX. section of the School Act, and of the IV. clause of the Act Supplementary of last year. This is so palpable that none but an idiot can fail to perceive it.

Whatever tends to strengthen the common, or Protestant school system of Upper Canada, must, to the same extent, tend to depress the Catholic, or separate school system; unless the latter be allowed to share in the advantages conferred upon the former. Now, as Mr. Hincks's Bill gives over, to the County Municipalities, the funds accruing from the secularised Clergy Reserves, with power to devote the said funds to purposes, only, for which they can already legally raise money—and, as by the 27th section of the Upper Canada School Act, these Municipalities are authorised to levy money for common, or Protestant school purposes; but are not authorised to levy money for Catholic, or separate school purposes—it is clear that the effect of Mr. Hincks's Bill will be to exalt the former, at the expense of the latter; and thus to deprive our brethren of Upper Canada of the last shadow of Freedom of Education. And it is for this measure, so fraught with danger to our Catholic institutions in Lower Canada, so certainly fatal to the Catholic schools of the Upper Province, that the *Montreal Freeman*, and other *soi-disant* Catholic journalists invite Irishmen and Catholics to vote!

It is curious to note how, in treating this question of "secularisation," our contemporaries carefully avoid all allusions to its effect upon the Catholic school system. They cannot deny our premises; nay! the *Leader*—the Ministerial organ of Upper Canada—not only admits them, but earnestly insists upon them, as reasons why the opponents of Catholic separate schools should abandon all opposition to Mr. Hincks's Bill. Neither can they contest our conclusions, for they are too patent, too self-evident to be denied. To what then shall we attribute their rancorous hostility towards the *True Witness*?

We have but this to add—that every man who is, at heart, friendly to Catholic separate schools—that every man who is indeed a Catholic, and not a hypocrite—will do his best to oppose a measure, whose object is to pass over to the Municipalities of Upper Canada, large sums of public money, which they may, if they please, devote to common, or Protestant school purposes; but of which they are prohibited from giving one penny to the Catholic, or separate schools. This being, as the *Toronto Leader* clearly shows, the main feature, and in the eyes of the Protestant Liberals of Upper Canada, the chief recommendation, of Mr. Hincks's "Reserves" Bill.

Writing on "Our Separate Schools," the *Toronto Mirror* of the 21st instant says:—

"The sophistry and craft that insidiously imposed on Catholics the present insulting and oppressive School Law, have, on several occasions, been ably and unanswerably exposed by His Lordship."

By whom—would we ask the *Mirror*—was the "present insulting and oppressive School Law" insidiously imposed on Catholics? Was not the School Law, as at present existing, imposed, at the recommendation of Dr. Ryerson, by the present Ministry, and in spite of the opposition of the Catholic press? Did not the *True Witness*, when the Bill was in discussion, warn the Catholics of Upper Canada against accepting such a miserable substitute for the large and substantial measure of justice which they were entitled to demand?—and was not the *True Witness*, for so doing, severely taken to task, by the *Canvasser* and *soi-disant* Catholic organs of the Ministry?

The fact of the matter is, that the Act Supplementary of 1853 was a humbug; in the language of the Bishop of Toronto, "a share and a mockery."