

Appendix (D)

obligation contracted in 1801, or which may have rendered the fulfilment of it at that time impracticable."

However, this admission was followed by no better results. Up to this moment the only Acts of the British Government, in respect of Canadian instruction, have been the wholesale seizure, and the partial restoration, of the Jesuits' estates. At length the House of Assembly determined to take up this question, and passed a Bill, which, however, was thrown out by the Legislative Council. Its principal features are the same as those which distinguish the Elementary School Acts that subsequently came into operation, and to which I shall shortly call your Excellency's more particular attention. Two of its provisions, namely, those contained in the 11th section, are worthy of notice. They both relate to the master; one requiring that, among other qualifications, he shall bring a certificate of loyalty, and the other fixing his salary at 60*l*. This latter particular I advert to, because it shows what far juster notions were entertained in those days of the competent provision for a teacher, than appears to have been the case in later times. An abstract of this Bill will be found in Appendix (B.) No. 2.

In 1818 another Bill was passed by the Assembly. This, after reciting the necessity of elementary schools, and the advantage of subjecting them to local control, vests the trusteeship of those created under its provisions in a corporation, consisting of the rector, curate or priest, &c., with the four churchwardens last appointed, of the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church, the seigneur primitif and senior justice of the peace, who were to report annually to the inhabitants. A sum of 200*l*. was to be granted from the provincial treasury to the trustees of every parish or township in which a house had been built and opened, sufficient for the residence of a master, and the instruction of 30 children. The school was to receive no further support from the legislature, but was entitled to one-fourth of the yearly revenues of the fabrique, until its yearly income from other sources should amount to 100*l*.; and the master was to be paid by fees from the children, never, however, at a rate exceeding 5*s*. per month from each. This Bill, (see Appendix (B.) No. 3,) after some amendments by the council which were concurred in, was reserved for the Royal Assent, since which it was never heard of. A similar fate attended two similar Bills the two following years.

Up to this period the corporation contemplated by the 41 Geo. 3, having never been erected, letters patent were issued for that purpose in October 1818. The Protestant Bishop of Quebec was named the principal of the institution, and certain other trustees from time to time appointed to act with him.

Great stress has been laid upon the two following rules, which are among the first they made, as indicative of the liberal spirit in which they entered on their duties: "That every school should be placed under the immediate inspection of the clergy of the religion professed by the inhabitants of the spot, and that, where they might be of different persuasions, the clergy of each church should have the superintendence of the children of their respective communities." "That a regular superintendence of the schools was assigned to visitors named by the corporation (one or more to be the minister or ministers of the parish or township), who were to report to them every six months the number and progress of the scholars, the conduct of the masters, and generally on the state of the schools."

The institution entered upon the management of all the then existing schools supported by Government, and continued from year to year, but very slowly, to augment their number. This remained the sole legislative provision for education up to the year 1824. It will be perhaps better again to break in upon the regular course of events, and pursue the history of the Royal Institution to its end, disencumbering it from the other systems which were for some years co-existent with it, and by which it was finally absorbed. That it failed entirely is admitted on all hands, and there is no disagreement as to the immediate cause of failure, namely, its unpopularity with the French Canadians and the Catholic Church. This unpopularity was founded on the exclusively British and Protestant character by which, it was asserted, its organization and management were distinguished. A committee of the House of Assembly, appointed in 1824 to inquire into its operation, reported, among other things, that, out of its 20 trustees, only five, and only 22 out of its 81 school visitors, were Canadians. In spite of the apparent liberality of the rules, this constitution of the authorities, by whom they were to be carried into effect, inspired such jealousies, and so offended the religious and national antipathies of the Canadians, that they withdrew their confidence from the institution, and rarely applied for schools under its direction. And, indeed, this was a natural enough result. Suppose the proportions of the members of the corporation and of the visitors, as regards their national origin, had been reversed, and that the Catholic bishop had been placed at its head, what would have been the popularity of such an institution with the Protestants and the British?

In the townships the system naturally worked better, and the demand for schools was proportionately great.

In 1827 an attempt was made to divide the board of the institution into two committees, composed of an equal number of members, and possessing equal privileges; the new one to be entirely Catholic, under the presidency of the Catholic bishop, and to have the exclusive management of all Catholic schools. After the two parties had with some difficulty been brought to acquiesce in this arrangement, it was discovered that there were some legal impediments in the way of carrying it into effect, and a Bill for the repeal of such parts of the 41 George 3, as interposed these impediments, was suggested by

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