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SCHOOL QUESTION.

Another Great Speech

By

HON. SENATOR BERNIER.

From the Senate Debates, Feb. 15, 1898.

HON. MR. BERNIER—This debate is very likely drawing to a close. Before it closes I ask the indulgence of the House while I may make a few remarks in connection with a subject which I expected would be mentioned in the speech from the throne and which is conspicuous by its absence. Fortunately the hon. gentleman from Marquette has to some extent supplemented the omission by some of his remarks—I mean the school question. My honorable friend in his brief reference to the subject accounted for the absence of any mention of it in the speech from the throne by the reason that, according to his views, that subject was practically out of range of our deliberations now. Has the hon. gentleman correctly interpreted on that matter the sentiments of the government? Does the government really believe that this subject can be dropped in that way? If that were the case, I must say that no greater delusion could pervade the minds of the hon. members on the treasury benches. And I am bound at this stage of our deliberations to give them a warning. We stand to-day where we have always stood. From the first we have made up our minds that we would appeal to the constitution of our country to remedy the grievances we have, and from that moment we have been decided to leave no stone unturned in order to get justice. We are just as decided now as we were in 1890 to pursue that course. No delay will deter us from pursuing that course, and no obstacles will induce the minority to surrender their rights. These rights have been determined by the pronouncement of the Privy Council. They have been determined more especially by the remedial order passed by the late government. And while mentioning that remedial order it is but fair that I should point to the statesman to whom we are indebted for the passing of that judgment, which has finally decided the whole case. There he is sitting in this House as an honored leader of an important group in the Senate. He, a Protestant, he who is personally opposed to denominational schools, saw the justice of our contentions, he saw the necessity of upholding the constitution, and with the uprightness which characterizes him, he had the remedial order passed. To him also and to his friends around him we owe the only serious attempt that has been made to relieve the minority from the distress under which it is labouring.

That remedial order cannot be altered, or modified or withdrawn. The Governor General in Council cannot pass any Order in Council that would modify or destroy that first remedial order; and unless the Imperial parliament interferes that order will stand for ever.

HON. MR. BOULTON—Did not the legislation of the province of Manitoba close the question?

HON. MR. BERNIER—No, not at all; it left the question as open as ever, because no local legislation can do away with the remedial order unless it completely complies with such remedial order.

HON. MR. BOULTON—That legislation of the Province of Manitoba was at the desire, or on the instructions of the Governor General in Council and was a settlement between the Governor General in Council and the Province of Manitoba on the remedial order.

HON. MR. BERNIER—It was at the desire of the government, I do not contradict that; but I say the desire of the government in that respect did not comply with the judgment which the Governor General in Council had before passed and consequently their action, as well as the action of the local legislature, is absolutely inadequate. As a matter of fact, this action far from being adequate to the requirements of the remedial order is the very reverse and would be substantially the destruction of the remedial order of 1895, which this government or any other government have no right and no power to do.

HON. SIR MACKENZIE BOWELL—Where did the hon. gentleman obtain the infor-

mation that there was an Order in Council agreeing to any such arrangement? If my recollection is correct the Secretary of State informed me at the time that there were no records at all, and that everything that was done was simply by conversation.

HON. MR. BOULTON—The hon. leader of the opposition knows that a commission was sent to the Province of Manitoba to negotiate with the provincial government.

HON. SIR MACKENZIE BOWELL—By whom?

HON. MR. BOULTON—By the government of which the hon. gentleman was a member.

HON. SIR MACKENZIE BOWELL—I thought the hon. gentleman was referring to the action of the present government.

HON. MR. BOULTON—I am referring now to the fact that the government, of which the hon. gentleman was a member, if not the leader, sent a commission for the purpose of settling this question with the province of Manitoba. That failed to effect that arrangement; then the new government came in and almost in the same terms effected an arrangement with the province as a full discharge of the obligations of the province of Manitoba under the terms of the Order in Council.

HON. SIR MACKENZIE BOWELL—Oh no.

HON. MR. BERNIER—The hon. gentleman is omitting this fact, that in the instructions given by the late government to the commission he refers to, there was this: that commission was instructed not to make an arrangement except with the consent of the minority. That consent we did not give, and as a matter of fact we were never called to give our consent, because the commissioners saw clearly themselves that the government of Manitoba was not willing to come to a satisfactory arrangement, and they returned without accomplishing anything. Let me state again that no arrangement which may fall short of the requirements of the remedial order, can have any effect upon the remedial order without our consent.

Having so stated our position, I must refer to certain facts and to a certain document which are now of public notoriety. Last year some of the gentlemen supporting the government of the day and some of the cabinet ministers, amongst whom the right hon. premier himself, appealed as against us to a high authority on the other side of the ocean, an authority which always commands the highest respect from the adherents of the church to which I belong. It is of no small importance to remark here that the minority was not a party to that appeal. The minority has always been of opinion they were correctly interpreting the doctrine of their church in matters of education, and they were satisfied that our constitution afforded sufficient means to remedy their grievances. But the appeal having been taken to the authority to which I have alluded, and the answer having come, we must take notice of it. It is well to state that in the document to which I allude our claims are fully sustained and the views of the appellants are not sustained. This document cannot bind in any constitutional or legal way the citizens of Canada, and the Pope does not profess that it can, but although such is the case, that document has been received in Canada with such a marked favour that it would be on our part a dereliction of duty not to acknowledge it. Those amongst our countrymen who do not belong to our faith have no doubt felt that, independent of all religious views, the voice of such an exalted and experienced statesman, the voice of the head of a large portion of the Canadian people in spiritual matters, the voice which has the privilege of drawing the attention of the whole universe when it makes itself heard, should be received with deference, and it has been so received by all classes in our community. This is a source of great gratification to us. It shows that there is in the heart of the Canadian people a sense of justice which one day will come to the top and make itself felt in the solution of the present difficulties.

Now, will the non-gentlemen who have sought this utterance, do what is advised therein? The so-called settlement is condemned in no uncertain sound, their action consequently is censured. Will they comply with the terms

of the answer that they have received?

As I have already said, that document cannot be ignored, but it leaves us as free as ever to fight for the maintenance of the constitution of our country, and we will ever be free to do so.

HON. MR. BOULTON—It must be on some different lines.

HON. MR. BERNIER—What do you mean? The maintenance of the constitution is a clear line, a clear platform, and a sound and patriotic one too.

HON. MR. BOULTON—You cannot make a further appeal to the Governor General in Council.

HON. MR. BERNIER—It is not necessary to make a further appeal, because our appeal is still standing; or rather, it has been adjudicated upon. Let the judgment be executed now! Until it is, we will hold to it. No further appeal is necessary to revive our case; it is fully alive still. As I have said, we want simply the maintenance of the constitution. The constitution is the ground on which we have based our hopes for the protection of parental rights; and parental rights and the constitution will remain the ground on which we will continue to advocate the redress of our grievances. Let the parliamentary compact entered into at the time of the union be carried out, or else let every province in confederation take its own course as before. What is the use of confederating ourselves if each province can at any time disregard the conditions of its entry into that confederation and break the pledges that it has taken? The government of no country can be carried on unless on the principle that good faith must be kept with everybody, with every corporation, with every section of the country, and above all with the constitution itself.

HON. MR. BOULTON—Will the hon. gentleman tell me where the province of Manitoba made any pledge?

HON. MR. BERNIER—Yes, I could speak for an hour relating all the pledges they have made. I did so in 1894 when speaking here. I then mentioned the pledges they made.

HON. MR. BOULTON—You mean the Acts they passed subsequent to confederation?

HON. MR. BERNIER—I mean the pledges taken when the province came into the union; I mean the pledges taken by the legislature of the province when the legislative council was abolished; I mean the pledges which the liberal party took in that now celebrated election of St. Francis Xavier; I mean the pledges Mr. Greenway took when he formed his government; I mean the school legislation passed by the local legislature subsequent to its entry into confederation, which is more than a pledge; I mean the pledges that were taken both by the local authorities and by the federal authorities when they invited the people of the eastern provinces to go and settle in Manitoba in order that the immense resources of that province could be worked up. That invitation was coupled with the assurance that the educational laws in particular afforded protection to the views of everybody, and that they could and would not be disturbed. If such representations had not been made, I for one would not have gone there and worked for the colonization of that province. To-day, all these pledges are violated. It is to the shame of Canada that for eight long years the constitution has been so violated.

Under the circumstances I say that we must maintain our claims. We will not recede one iota from the position we have taken from the first. At the same time I must say this, that while holding such a position, we do not want to put any obstacles in the way of an equitable settlement. We have justice on our side; we have the constitution on our side; we want also to put generosity on our side.

In the document to which I have alluded, there is an invitation to every one of us to be moderate, there is an invitation to peace and harmony. We love peace, and we desire peace. We are cheerfully willing to follow the advice that is contained in that document. At present it might be contended that sufficient time has not yet elapsed since that utterance has been made known, to enable the competent authorities to come to a decision. I take it for granted that those who have appealed to Rome have done so with a view to abiding by the decision they should receive. Now,

granting that they have not had time to effect anything up to the present, we are willing to be patient, but patience does not mean surrender. If the competent authorities are willing to do what is right, let them do so of their own motion within a reasonable time. If full justice is given, well and good; if not, if no justice at all is rendered to us, or if only partial justice is given us, it will be our duty to maintain our position and to continue the fight we began in 1890; it is our duty to make the government and the country acquainted with our determination to take the constitution into our hands, and without any break in our efforts, ask parliament to redeem the honour of this Canada of ours, which stands to-day, I regret to say, in an unenviable position. The other day the right honourable premier closed a speech in another place by a eulogy of liberty. Liberty is just what we want. But there is no liberty where the constitution is violated. There is no liberty where a crushing injustice is done to so large a portion of the people; and to use the words of Sir A. T. Galt, there is no greater injustice than to force a people to educate their children contrary to their conscientious convictions. As British subjects, as citizens of Canada, we are entitled to the protection of the constitution and of those who are called to carry on the government of Her Majesty. And this protection we will continue to claim and surely sooner or later we shall get it.

HON. MR. BOULTON—Will the hon. gentleman tell us what he expects this parliament to do in the matter?

HON. MR. BERNIER—I will tell the hon. gentleman what I wish should take place. I wish that the local government of the province should remedy the grievances of the minority of their own motion. That is our due, first because the local government were the offenders, and second because they are the competent and proper authority to deal first with the question. As an adherent to constitutional principles, I say that since education rests with the local government, I am quite willing to leave it in their hands, but when the constitution is being violated and the local government refuses to redress the grievances that they themselves created, as in this case, and more particularly since the remedial order was passed, parliament is vested with jurisdiction in the matter, and it is the duty of the government to introduce remedial legislation and of this parliament to adopt it.

Rev. Father Drummond.

A Sermon on "Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures."

Speaking at the Church of the Immaculate Conception Sunday before last on the subject, "Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures," Rev. Father Drummond said the word inspiration was taken from the Latin of the Vulgate, 2nd epistle of Peter, 1st chap., 21st verse and 2nd of Timothy, 3rd Chap., 16th verse. In the Greek text from St. Peter the figure of "breathing into" was not so clear as in the Latin version, but in the text from Timothy the original Greek shows forcibly that the human writer is breathed upon by God. What does this does inspiration mean? Not merely a pious inclination, nor a special assistance of the Holy Ghost, nor a revelation. The pious inclination gave no assurance of infallibility, and yet inspiration must be infallibly true. The assistance of the Holy Ghost preserved indeed from error, as in the case of the Pope defining ex cathedra, but it was rather negative than positive, and did not suppose that the determination to write came from God. Revelation being a supernatural manifestation of a truth hitherto unknown to the one who now receives it, was often contained in the inspired writers, but was not wide enough to embrace them all, since many part of the Bible bore internal evidence that the authors knew by natural means several things which they described or related. Inspiration properly so-called was, then, a supernatural help which acting on the will of the human writer, determined him to write by enlightening his mind so as to suggest to him the substance at least of what he was to write. From Leo XIII's ency-

clical "Providentissimus Dens," of November 18th, 1893, they learned that God, by his supernatural influence, so stirred and moved the human writers and so assisted them, that they rightly conceived in their minds that, and that only which he bade them write, and that they would to write it faithfully, and that with unfeigned truth they expressed themselves apply, for otherwise God would not be the author of the whole of the sacred Scripture. This implied: (1) a supernatural determination of the will to write as in Exodus 17th Chap., 14th verse, and Isaiah 8th Chap., 1st verse. The design must come from the author, God. It was not enough that a man should write a work and that God should approve it afterwards, and, as it were, make it his own. The inspired writer might not know that he was inspired; it was enough that he should be inspired; (2) the illumination of the mind by which the Holy Ghost either reveals to the human writer what he does not know or suggests to him what part of his already acquired knowledge he should make use of or at least assists him in such a way that the writer avoids all error in what he writes, and says only what God wills and as He wills it; (3) a certain influence on the choice of words and the order of the thoughts, whether by dictation or supervision, so that nothing false might enter into the work. This last condition did not, however, imply verbal inspiration in the sense that every word of scripture was dictated by the Holy Spirit to the prophets and apostles, so that they acted as mere machines. No! the preacher did not hold verbal inspiration in that sense; it was unnecessary, and therefore unproved, and it was open to the grave objection that it failed to account for the varieties of style amongst the sacred writers. For instance, the difference between the style of Isaiah and that of Amos was immense. One false view of inspiration had already been touched upon—that which supposed that a book might be adopted by the Holy Ghost after it was written. Another false view considered that it was enough for the inspiration of the book that it contained revelation without admixture of error. That was not enough. A professor might watch over a student's work in such a way as to keep him from error, and yet the student and not the professor would be the author of that work.

Since God is the author of all inspired scripture, whatever the scripture conveyed to them was true. This principle held without distinction of the nature of the matter, or of its greater or less importance. This freedom from error could not, of course, be asserted of every word which was attributed in scripture to the persons mentioned, as when they read the question of the Jews, Mark 2nd, 7th verse: "Who can forgive sins save God only?" they did not accept this doctrine as true. All that the inspired writer was pledged to was the use of the words on that occasion. It was often difficult to seize the meaning intended by the sacred writer; there might be apparent contradictions which, however, admitted of a rational explanation, but they must always hold to the rule laid down by St. Augustine: "In dealing with these books you must not say that the author was mistaken, but either the text is corrupt or the translation faulty, or you fail to catch the meaning."

'Tis Ever So.

I laughed aloud:
All the crowd and there
Swore faulty men
I laughed in mirth:
The gay old earth
Laughed with me and seemed fair.

Lo! sorrow came:
At its name,
The light throng moved away.
I sighed a moan,
But all alone,
Men still laughed all the day.

I sought relief
In my grief,
The world had none to give.
I turned to God,
I kissed His rod,
He, loving, bid me live.

'Tis ever so:
Bent down in woe,
Our God is with us then,
But in our glee,
From sorrow free,
We turn to sinful men.

N. A. GIBBOO.