

explained to the Senate by the honourable Minister without Portfolio (Hon. Mr. McCutcheon), who introduced it, and by the honourable gentleman who has just spoken.

PRIVATE BILL

THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS OF IRELAND IN CANADA—SECOND READING

Hon. John G. Higgins moved the second reading of Bill S-7, to incorporate The Christian Brothers of Ireland in Canada.

He said: Honourable senators, it is with much interest, deep pride and abounding pleasure that I undertake the task of introducing this bill in the Senate today. From the time I attained my fifth year until I reached university status I was under the care and tutelage of the Order of the Christian Brothers of Ireland.

I am assuming that most of you had never heard of this Order until it was mentioned in this chamber last week. Of course, little was known about it in Newfoundland—except among a few people born in Ireland—until it was introduced there, and some time elapsed before it was known generally throughout the country.

The title "Christian Brothers" had a familiar ring about it, but it had a familiarity associated with commerce. In the 19th century, before the institution of limited liability companies, a number of mercantile firms affixed the word "Brothers" to their family name. There was, for instance, Martin Brothers. These mercantile firms, with others, used to buy fish in August or September from fishermen in various parts of Newfoundland in order to sell it on the various markets in Europe: England, Greece, France, Italy and Spain. The price to be offered to fishermen would not be known until some time in August or September, when the contracts with the foreign firms had been made.

One August, shortly after the Order came to Newfoundland, two Christian Brothers went on a holiday in a steamer going around one of the bays. They were standing on the deck, dressed in their black clothes and clerical collars, as the steamer entered a little cove where there was a small village. On the wharf stood the magistrate and some fishermen. One of the fishermen approached the magistrate and asked, "Magistrate, who are these men?" The magistrate replied, "They are Christian Brothers." Mused the fisherman, "Christian Brothers? I have dealt with Job Brothers, Bowering Brothers and Ryan Brothers, but I have never heard of Christian Brothers. What price are they offering for fish?"

It was not too long before the name "Christian Brothers" became familiar throughout the country. In fact, I may say that many years ago it was said that the greatest blessings ever imported into Newfoundland were rabbits and Christian Brothers.

At first the members of the Order came from Ireland, but later a number of Newfoundlanders joined the Order and were sent to Ireland to be educated, afterwards returning to Newfoundland as Brothers. That state of affairs no longer exists, and now the ranks of the Christian Brothers of Ireland consist almost entirely of citizens of Canada and the United States.

Having presumed that you do not know anything about the Order—and what I have just said does not help in any way to a better understanding—I trust that you will not mind my delivering a short account of the history of the Order, because it has something to do with Canadian education.

The Order originated in Ireland. The founder was Edmund Ignatius Rice, a member of a well-known family in County Kilkenny, Southern Ireland. He was apprenticed to his uncle, Michael Rice, who had a substantial business in Waterford, County Cork, and was an exporter, importer and dealer in ships' provisions.

Edmund Rice inherited his uncle's business and became a successful businessman. At the age of 38 years he was the owner of about 2,000 acres of land and much property in Waterford and Callen, County Kilkenny, and possessed a capital of about £50,000. At this age he decided on the nature of his vocation. He decided that he would retire from commercial life and devote himself to the education of the Catholic youth of Waterford. For many years he had devoted much time and money to looking after the poor, the aged and destitute, and prisoners in the local jail. When he died there was nothing left of his fortune, one which would have been regarded as large in those days.

There was a glaring lack of educational facilities for the poor boys of the city of Waterford, in fact, for the whole of Ireland. There were charter schools throughout Ireland, but they were used to proselytize the Catholic youth. The only alternative was the "hedge school", the teaching of the youth in the open air, in the ditches and behind hedges where, among other subjects, Latin and sciences were still taught, besides the three R's. This was the system in use while the penal laws were in force in Ireland.

Talking of the hedge school reminds me that during the 19th century a number of Irish teachers came from Ireland and taught school in many of the outlying parts of Newfoundland. Not only did they teach the three