



Senate R. Room

THE ONLY CATHOLIC WEEKLY PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH BETWEEN LONDON (ONTARIO) AND THE PACIFIC COAST

VOL. XXI, No. 52

WINNIPEG, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1905

\$2.00 per year
\$1.50 if paid in advance
Single Copies 5 cents

DR. BARRETT AND THE TRIBUNE

Knowing that Dr. J. K. Barrett was fully able to reply to the Tribune's comments on his letter of Sept. 15 to the Free Press, we made but a brief reference in our issue of Sept. 23, to the Tribune's "laboriously feeble" editorial attempt to refute the able Doctor. In the Tribune of that same date, Sept. 23, appeared the following letter:

The Privileges Quebec Grants

To the Editor of the Tribune.

Sir—Under the above caption you have honored a recent letter of mine to the Free Press with a column and a half of editorial. Would you further extend your courtesy by giving this letter a place in your valuable columns. I may say that my absence from the city is the cause of not sooner noticing your editorial. You say:

"Protestant separate schools in Quebec exist as the result of a cold-blooded business bargain between the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario.

"Quebec wanted separate schools for Roman Catholics in Ontario. Ontario wanted separate schools for Protestants in Quebec.

"The two provinces came to an agreement whereby Ontario granted the Roman Catholics separate schools, and in consideration for this concession, Quebec granted the same privileges to Quebec Protestants.

"This agreement was later incorporated in the constitution of Canada."

Permit me to say that this statement is glaringly untrue. Let us get down to facts: Protestant dissentient schools existed in the province of Quebec immediately the Protestant minority asked for them. Separate schools were granted in Ontario in 1863, and the dissentient schools of Quebec antedate the establishment of separate schools in Ontario by ten or fifteen years. For long years after Quebec came under British rule the population was almost entirely Catholic, and the people had nothing to say in the government of the province. When things changed and the Protestant population increased, they asked for schools of their own and got them. No one can deny that these schools were separate schools within the closest interpretation of the term. If, then, it is a fact that Quebec granted separate schools to the Protestant minority away back in the early fifties, at least ten years prior to the establishment of separate schools in Ontario, how can you truthfully say: "Protestant separate schools in Quebec exist as a result of a cold-blooded business bargain between the provinces of Quebec and Ontario?" I again quote from your editorial:

"As it is difficult to indulge in a critical comparison of the different views of education held by the Quebec Hierarchy and the Education Departments of other provinces without arousing religious prejudices, the Tribune avoids such comparison until the interests of the public demand it. But it is here affirmed that the Protestants of Quebec have not rights nor privileges to be compared for a moment with the rights and privileges enjoyed by the Roman Catholics in other provinces."

Your Catholic readers, Mr. Editor, cannot fail to appreciate your delicate forbearance in not wishing to arouse religious prejudices. It is my sincere desire to believe in the sincerity of the Tribune when it says it does not desire to arouse "religious prejudices." But, sir, when Catholics read, day after day the remarks of the Tribune on the Quebec Hierarchy, the Apostolic Delegate, etc., etc., it requires more credulity than we possess to believe that you do not wish to arouse religious prejudices. But let that go, and let us see what there is in your affirmation that "the Protestants of Quebec have no rights or privileges to be compared for a moment with the rights and privileges enjoyed by Roman Catholics in other provinces." What provinces do you mean? Manitoba? Surely not! If not in Manitoba, where then? The only places where separate schools existed outside of Manitoba were in Ontario and the Northwest Territories.

In both these places "the education departments" have whittled down our rights and privileges by annoying rules and regulations to such a fine point that it often requires strong lenses to find the point. It is so easy for you to make sweeping statements that will not stand the tests of history. Now, Sir, I defy you to give me one instance where the Catholic majority of Quebec ever refused to grant to the Protestant minority any right or privilege they ask for, or, after granting it, ever attempted to minimize it by annoying and vexatious regulations. Come, now, let us have the very truth. I beg of you not to allow your delicate and sensitive soul to prevent you from telling the truth, even though you may have to arouse religious prejudices. Lay bare before your readers the "tale of woe" of your Protestant friends in Quebec. Remember, you have the evidence of the Protestant public men of Quebec against you. From their places in Parliament they have declared that they have been treated fairly and generously by the Quebec majority. But they may not know as much as you do on this important subject. Let me again appeal to you to give us facts, cold facts, but please accompany them with proof of their accuracy. If you can prove that Quebec has been guilty of any act of persecution against the rights and privileges of the Protestant minority, I will unite with you in denouncing them. But if you cannot, then, Mr. Editor, I shall hold myself free to characterize your statements as mere slander on Quebec. Now, Sir, let me quote the closing sentence in your editorial:

"Canada is a democratic country. In democratic countries the majority must rule, or the country cease to be a democracy.

"The majority may be right or the majority may be wrong. Right or wrong, the majority must rule—or democratic government disappears.

"To claim that the minority is right, and consequently should rule, is to claim that a democracy should be abolished and an oligarchy, an autocracy, or an all-powerful imperium in imperio established in its place.

"But so long as democratic government is supposed to flourish in this country, it is the duty of the people to see that nothing but the voice of the majority dictates Canadian policy."

This, Sir, is begging the question. No one ever questioned the right of the majority to rule, but they must rule in conformity to the constitution that gives them the right to rule. That constitution was not framed by the minority. True, it could never have been framed against the wish of the minority. For instance, that constitution could never have been framed against the wishes of the Protestant minority of Quebec.

These gentlemen practically said: We will agree to a constitution, provided the rights of minorities are fully guaranteed. We will not trust the majority on certain points affecting our rights to educate our children in schools according to our principles. That was the ultimatum of the minority to the majority, and if the majority did not agree with it, then the Federal constitution and confederation of the provinces could never have been accomplished. The constitution of Canada was a compromise between the majority and the minority, and must be respected. It is there and must be obeyed. It is the veriest rot to talk about the rights of the majority to rule. We will admit that the majority must rule. But even majorities must have a constitution which gives them the right to rule. If they exceed that authority they violate their right to rule and have no right to be obeyed.

J. K. BARRETT.

Winnipeg, Sept. 22, 1905.

On Monday, Sept. 25, the Tribune published the following editorial reply:

Separate Schools in Quebec and Ontario

On Saturday the Tribune published a letter from Dr. J. K. Barrett, in reply

to a recent editorial on the privileges Quebec grants to the Protestant minority.

Exception is taken to the Tribune's statement that separate schools in Quebec and Ontario exist as the result of a bargain or compromise between the two provinces. This statement of fact is characterized as "glaringly untrue."

To prove that this statement is "glaringly untrue," Dr. Barrett says that Protestant schools were granted in Quebec in the early fifties, whereas in Ontario the Roman Catholics were not granted the same privileges until 1863.

Though the dates of granting separate schools in Ontario and Quebec have no connection with the Tribune's statement in regard to the interprovincial bargain, it may be pointed out that separate school legislation in Ontario started in 1840, not in 1863, as has been frequently claimed.

It was in 1863 that the representatives of the Hierarchy bound the church to accept the legislation passed in that year as a final settlement of a prolonged struggle—which settlement was shortly afterwards repudiated by the Hierarchy.

The legislation of 1863 was carried by a solid Quebec vote—a large majority of the Ontario members voting against it.

But this is not the point in dispute.

The Tribune stated that separate schools exist to-day as the result of a bargain between the two provinces.

That statement is now repeated.

During the negotiations that finally led to Confederation, Quebec firmly refused to become a part of the Dominion unless separate schools as they then existed should be perpetuated by the constitution.

Clearly Ontario did not desire such schools in Ontario. There is no reason to suppose that Quebec desired them in Quebec. But each province did desire them in the other province. And eventually they agreed upon a bargain, or compromise—if the latter term be more pleasing.

The Tribune's statement, that the Protestant minority in Quebec does not enjoy privileges to be compared with the privileges enjoyed by the Roman Catholic minority elsewhere is also challenged.

Here are the facts.

In Canada, outside the province of Quebec, wherever the Roman Catholics have not their own church schools, Roman Catholic children can be educated in absolutely non-sectarian public schools—schools that are entirely secular.

In the province of Quebec, wherever there are not sufficient Protestants to have a non-sectarian school, Protestant children are compelled to go without education, or to attend purely sectarian schools in which the Roman Catholic religion is constantly taught, almost to the exclusion of secular subjects.

Surely no one familiar with the facts can say that these conditions can be compared—at least, to the credit of Quebec.

It is claimed that the privileges of the Roman Catholics in Ontario have been "whittled down" since 1863 and since Confederation.

This statement is directly opposed to the facts.

Since 1863 and since Confederation the Roman Catholics have steadily added to their privileges in Ontario, by making use of unprincipled politicians and playing one political party against the other.

In conclusion Dr. Barrett admits that the majority in a democratic country must rule, but that it must rule according to the constitution, which—in accordance with the demands of the "Quebec Protestants"—provides "certain privileges for the minority."

No one denies that the constitution must be respected—but no one familiar with that part of Canadian History dealing with the creation of the constitution can justly claim that "the

Protestant minority of Quebec" is responsible for the separate school provisions in that constitution.

The constitution exists. It must be respected. Who displays the greater respect for it—the man who puts forth every effort to prevent a competent court deciding what it really provides for, or the man who demands an authoritative and impartial decision, that he may know what the constitution demands?

The Quebec Hierarchy is putting forth every effort to prevent discovering what the constitution means—yet that same Hierarchy is loudest in its insistence that the constitution be respected.

Before giving Dr. Barrett's rejoinder to this article, we wish to elucidate one condition which the Tribune has misrepresented. Our McDermot Avenue contemporary says that: "in the province of Quebec, wherever there are not sufficient Protestants to have a non-sectarian school, Protestant children are compelled to go without education, or to attend purely sectarian schools in which the Roman Catholic religion is constantly taught, almost to the exclusion of secular subjects."

In this quotation there are at least three misrepresentations. In the first place, the separate schools of Quebec are not "non-sectarian," they are distinctively Protestant. In this respect they are like our Manitoba public schools, wherein the whole atmosphere is Protestant, the text-books of history and the explanations of the Protestant teachers are unmistakably Protestant, and frequently insulting to Catholics. The general tone of all these schools, when the teachers are Protestants, is contemptuously anti-Catholic. No such condition exists in Catholic schools. Allusions to Protestantism are rare, there is no such thing as an aggressively anti-Protestant atmosphere. There is no call for it. The Church has her consistent body of positive doctrines, which existed before Protestantism, the negation thereof, arose. She refutes error, when it attacks her; but her life does not consist in aggression as does the life of the Protestant sects, whose only bond of union is, as their very name shows, a standing protest against Catholic doctrine.

Secondly, it is not true, as the Tribune says, that Protestant children, where there is no separate school, must choose between no education at all and Catholic education. A third alternative is open to them, the only alternative which faithful Catholics can take in this city of Winnipeg: they can be educated at the expense of their parents without any government grant.

Thirdly, when the Tribune speaks of "purely sectarian schools, in which the Roman Catholic religion is constantly taught, almost to the exclusion of secular subjects," it is guilty, in that final clause which we have underlined, of deliberate and wicked falsehood. We challenge the editor to mention one single Catholic school in Quebec, wherein religion is taught "almost to the exclusion of secular subjects." The teaching of catechism is, as far as time goes, but a small part of the teacher's duties. Secular subjects, far from being almost excluded, are much more carefully taught than in most of our public schools here, because the teachers are less grievously handicapped by new-fangled experiments in pedagogy, and by a multitude of educational frills. Quebec Catholic children read and write better and know their language and its grammar better than most of the public school children here. To cast on Quebec Catholic schools such a venomous slur as is implied in the almost total exclusion of secular subjects reveals the true character of that editorial writer who has been imported here on the plea that he was "a born reformer with the soul of a martyr," as one of his admirers described him. A reformer, forsooth, that hates facts, a martyr to the noble cause of persistent misrepresentation.

The foregoing remarks are made doubly necessary, as a rectification of facts, by the Rev. R. G. McBeth's recent letter to the Free Press, in which he accuses Dr. Barrett of not stating the case fairly because he failed to

observe that the majority schools in Quebec are sectarian, whereas the majority schools in other provinces are unsectarian, and purely secular.

What we said above in correcting the Tribune's first misrepresentation, proves that there is much more sectarianism in non-Catholic than in Catholic schools. The schools of the majority will always reflect the religious attitude of the majority. In many parts of the United States the public schools are atheistic because the people have no religion; in this province they are aggressively Protestant, because Protestantism is well organized here; in Quebec they are Catholic because the people are profoundly Catholic. A non-sectarian school is an impossibility. French atheists have tried it to the uttermost by expunging the name of God from all school books, but this very fact shows that their schools are intensely, nay savagely sectarian, reflecting the worst of all sects, the haters of their Maker. "Non-sectarian" is one of those empty shibboleths that deceive only the unwary.

Dr. Barrett's rejoinder is here given.

To the Editor of the Tribune.

Sir—I do not propose to intrude too much on your valuable space, but I would like to say a few words in reply to your recent editorial comment on my last letter to you.

After all you have charged against the French Canadian Hierarchy and its intolerant treatment of the Protestant minority, it now seems that your only grievance consists in this: In some places in Quebec, where the Protestants are not sufficiently strong to have schools of their own, they have to send their children to the schools of the majority or to none. The province of Quebec gave the Protestant minority the privilege of establishing schools of their own choice. And now we are told that, when they are not strong enough to support such a school, they are compelled to send their children to the schools of the majority. I confess I cannot see where the grievance lies. If the majority refused to admit them into their schools there might be reasonable cause for a grievance. Is it reasonable to ask the majority to forego their rights and establish schools contrary to their principles, merely because a few pupils of another belief cannot support a school in accordance with their principles? Many Protestants voluntarily send their children to our schools and colleges even when their own schools are flourishing all around them. Catholics understand what is due to such parents and their children and never interfere or attempt to interfere with their religious beliefs. Thus fall to the ground your charges against the intolerant treatment of the Protestant minority by the Quebec Hierarchy, etc., etc.

You say: "It may be pointed out that separate school legislation started in 1840, not in 1863, as has been frequently claimed," and then you go on to say: "It was in 1863 that the representatives of the Hierarchy bound the Church to accept the legislation passed in that year as a final settlement of a prolonged struggle, which settlement was shortly afterwards repudiated by the Hierarchy." This is most interesting. How the representatives of the Hierarchy could bind the Church to accept as a final settlement something which the Hierarchy repudiated, is to say the least, a rather difficult thing for a Catholic to understand without some further explanation on your part. You tell us that "separate school legislation give separate schools to Ontario? Please give your readers the title of that Act of 1840, so that we may learn its contents. I never heard of it before. If separate schools were given to Ontario in 1840, what do you mean when you say: "after a prolonged struggle a final settlement was made in 1863?" If separate schools were given in 1840, what was the sense of "a prolonged struggle" running from 1840, when you say separate school legislation was "started" until 1863, when it was finally settled? How ingenious is your use wordof the "started"! How much

(Continued on page 5.)