

THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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The True Witness.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, MAY 28, 1858.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The City of Washington's mail is interesting. The Derby Administration is apparently amongst the breakers, and already a Ministerial crisis was anticipated. Lord Ellenborough had resigned, in consequence of a vote of censure pending over him for his despatch condemnatory of the conduct of the Governor-General towards the Oude insurgents; upon whom the authorities seem disposed to look rather as patriots contending for their national liberties, than as rebels or mutineers.

The recent election for Limerick has been declared null and void, on the ground of bribery. The Atlantic Telegraph wire had been all stowed away on board of the Niagara and Agamemnon, and all was ready for a start. From India there is nothing new. Lucknow was quiet, but the rebels were mustering strong in Rohilcund, where a summer campaign is considered inevitable.

The Africa arrived at New York yesterday. The resolutions, censuring the Ministry, had been carried in the House of Lords by a majority of 9; the debate was still pending in the Commons. Lord Stanley succeeds Lord Ellenborough, and Sir Lytton Bulwer takes the Colonial Office. Nothing new from India. Sir Colin Campbell about to start for Rohilcund.

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.—On the 19th the House was occupied with the discussion of the "Double Majority" question as it is called. On the motion of the Attorney-General, M. Thibaudau's motion, and M. Cauchon's amendment thereunto, were taken into consideration. The substance of the former was to the effect that any attempt at legislation, affecting one section of the Province, in opposition to the votes of the majority of the other section, would be unjust, and injurious to the interests of the Province. M. Cauchon's amendment commenced with asserting the principle of equality of representation for the two sections of the Province; and deduced therefrom the necessity of selecting as executive councillors, such persons only as possessed the confidence of the majority of the representatives of their respective sections.

An animated debate ensued, which clearly established the impolicy of the Union of two communities, with so little in common, and with so many great and conflicting interests, as the French Canadian Catholics of the Lower Province, and the Yankee Protestants of Upper Canada. Aliens to one another in blood, in language, and in religion, a living union between two such communities is impossible. Sooner or later one must absorb the other; and the "double majority" principle, which alone can save the less from being swallowed up, or absorbed by the greater, would be in fact but the recognition of two distinct Provinces, with their respective Legislatures meeting under one roof. Practically, therefore, the debate was of no importance. M. Cauchon proved conclusively that, upon the "double majority" question M. Loranger, the Minister, or the "In," held opinions opposed to those advocated a few months ago by M. Loranger, the "Out." M. Loranger retaliated, not by establishing his innocence of the charge of tergiversation brought against him, but by retorting, and to a considerable extent making good, a similar accusation against M. Cauchon, whose opinions as an "Out," were widely different from the opinions of M. Cauchon, the "In." This only serves to show that, in the squabbles of parties in Canada, there

is not on either side any principle at stake. The whole affair is but a struggle for office, for its patronage, and chances of peculation; and for the attainment of these objects, there is no act of meanness to which either of the contending parties—the "Ins" or the "Outs"—would not cheerfully give its adhesion, if by so doing, it could secure its ends. A famous statesman is said to have once called the attention of his son to the small amount of wisdom it required to govern a country; had he been acquainted with our Canadian politics, he would have exclaimed, "See, my son, with how little honesty mankind are governed!"

Many other speakers distinguished themselves during this most unprofitable debate, which lasted till Thursday evening, when the House adjourned without a division. A rather amusing scene took place betwixt M. Loranger and the press, which the honorable gentleman taxed with giving a false report of a certain speech of his on the "double majority" question; but the accuracy of which report is asserted by Mr. E. Penny in a letter to the Globe. Mr. Penny is well known for his talents as a reporter, and the scrupulous fidelity of his reports; the general opinion therefore seems to be that M. Loranger has been very unfortunate in his attack upon the press.

On Friday, 21st the Legislative Council took up the question of the "property qualification" for members of Parliament. In the course of the debate there was nothing remarkable, except an observation from Mr. Vankoughnet, to the effect that "if a man had lived in Canada any length of time, and had not acquired £500, his poverty was a pretty sure proof that he did not possess the intelligence required in a member of Parliament." There is to be sure another light in which such a person's "poverty" might be viewed; for it might be accepted as a proof of his too scrupulous honesty, and his unwillingness to enrich himself by the simple process of defrauding his neighbors. Poverty is, to say the least, as often the result of scrupulous integrity, as of want of intelligence; though we must admit that an excess of the former quality, as much unfit a man for efficiently performing the duties required of a Canadian statesman, as does a deficiency of the latter. The proposal, therefore, to abolish the "property qualification" was, we think, very properly rejected; for a man who cannot acquire money, has certainly no right to a place amongst those statesmen and legislators whose chief characteristic is, their marvellous aptitude for growing rapidly rich, as soon as they are entrusted with the handling of the public funds.

The report of the Committee of the Whole on the Emigrant Act being brought up in the Legislative Assembly, Mr. McGeer moved that it be referred back, with instructions to strike out the clause imposing a tax of one dollar upon the children of immigrants. On a division this amendment was lost by a majority of 58 to 42. The second reading of M. Cartier's Bill, to extend the summary jurisdiction of recorders, inspectors and superintendents of police, police magistrates, and other officers in criminal matters, was then moved, and carried.

On the 28th a Bill for the abolition of Sunday labor in the Post Offices and on the Canals was read a first time in the Legislative Council. A stormy debate in the other House upon a motion for giving three days in the week to Government measures, resulted in large majorities in favor of the Ministry, upon every division. The Emigrant Bill was read a third time, and the House went into committee on M. Cartier's Judicature Bill.

STATE-SCHOOLISM.—In bringing forward his motion for the second reading of the Bill to abolish separate schools—or in other words, to compel the Catholic minority of Upper Canada to pay for the schools of the Protestant majority—Mr. Ferguson frankly admitted that he was actuated by no religious motive. He had the decency also not to pretend even, that the measure by him proposed was just; but by his own showing, he brought it forward "simply because he thought the country"—that is the Protestant majority of Upper Canada—"demanded it."—Admirable reason! most unanswerable logic! The Protestant majority, actuated as majorities ever are, by an ardent desire to tyrannise over the minority—have uttered a vast amount of stinking breath, and demanded that the Papists be given over to them for a prey. And so, without stopping to enquire whether this demand be just, Protestant legislators must hasten to comply with the imperious bellowings of the cannaille, and at the bidding of the many headed beast, must make up their minds to perpetrate a grievous wrong upon the weaker portion of their fellow-citizens. A better proof of the fact often asserted by Catholics, that Protestantism tends to obliterate amongst those who are subject to its baneful influences, all distinction betwixt "right" and "wrong," and that it recognizes only the "expedient" or "profitable," it would be difficult to adduce. Because the Protestant majority of Upper Canada demand that the Catholic minority be compelled to pay for the schools of the former—to which schools Ca-

tholics conscientiously object, and "cannot without violence to their religious convictions send their children—therefore, and without any reference to the question of eternal and immutable "right," do Protestant law-makers become the mouth-piece and advocates of the tyrant majority. Reversing even the maxims of ancient Paganism, which, with all its faults, retained more of the divine, than does modern Protestantism, they adopt as their policy the principle of crouching down before the strong, and of trampling upon the weak. That Protestants demanded it, was the chief reason insisted upon, why Catholic parents should be compelled, to pay for the support of Non-Catholic schools!

The second great argument urged by Mr. Ferguson, Mr. G. Brown, and their friends for the abolition of separate schools, was one with which—we say it with shame and regret—we ourselves have furnished our enemies. Separate schools, argued the members in favor of their abolition, were not demanded by the Catholic laity. "It"—said Mr. Ferguson—(the separate school system)—"was only designed to meet the wishes of a few clergymen, but was opposed to the general feeling of the community. The Bill for its abolition had been before the House since the commencement of the session, but not a single petition had been presented against it, which he regarded as proof positive that it met with general favor."

This argument of the enemies of "Freedom of Education" is, we admit, a strong one; and did we not know what influences had been brought to bear upon the Catholic people through a corrupt and venal press, we should recognise it as unanswerable. But knowing as we do the nature and extent of those influences, we do not admit its validity; though to Protestants it must seem conclusive as to the fact of the total indifference of the great mass of the Catholic laity of Upper Canada to the blessings of "Freedom of Education," and their willingness to put up with the slavish and degrading yoke of "State-Schoolism." Upon this point then we may be permitted to say a word or two—in defence of the policy always advocated by the TRUE WITNESS with regard to the "School Question; and in justification of the Catholics of Upper Canada, who, whatever may be the case with some of their reputed organs, are not the timid, mercenary wretches that the arguments of our adversaries in the Legislature would make them out to be.

We have always insisted that it was unjust towards our Clergy, and most impolitic towards ourselves, for us to leave the former to bear the whole heat and burden of the day; and to look on as indifferent spectators, whilst they were fighting the good fight of "Freedom of Education."—The "School Question" we have always insisted, was not primarily a "Priest's Question," but a "Parent's Question;" that is to say, a question, not as betwixt the Clergy and the State, as to whom the education of the child by right belongs—but betwixt the Father and the State. Our position has always been that education is the function, not of the civil magistrate, but of the parent, not of the State, but of the Family; and that a "common school" system is as monstrous an anomaly in a free country, as would be a "common church" system, presided over by a Government official as Chief Superintendent of Religion. For these reasons we have always urged upon the Catholic laity the importance of constant, but strictly constitutional agitation, in order to show the world that the education of their children was a question in which they felt themselves directly interested; that it was in their character of parents, and not of Catholics, that they demanded the sole and absolute control over the education of their own little ones; and as a logical consequence, total exemption from all compulsory taxation for the support of schools against which, for any reasons whatsoever, they entertained any objections. Unless you do this—we have, time after time, repeated—unless you do this, unless you agitate, unless you flood the floor of the House with your petitions, and make the question of "Freedom of Education" a test question at all your elections—you will furnish your Protestant enemies with an argument of which they will not be slow to avail themselves; and you will put it in their power to say that the objections against "common schools" proceed solely from the ambition of a tyrannical priesthood, desirous, for their own selfish ends, to keep the people in ignorance—but are not entertained by the Catholic laity as a body. You will thus—we urged—by your culpable apathy, be the means of putting your clergy in a most odious light; and you will at the same time furnish your enemies with an apparently unanswerable argument against yourselves, which they will employ to your own discomfiture. "Agitate" therefore—we said; for though your agitation should avail nothing for the present, towards the overthrow of the actual infamous system, and the breaking asunder of the shackles of "State-Schoolism" wherein you are bound, it will at least have this effect;—that it will relieve your clergy—whose honor you are bound to consider before your own—of the imputations cast upon them by your enemies, and

their enemies. You will put it out of the power of men like this Ferguson, or his friend George Brown, to stand up in the House, and assert "it was only a few clergymen" who opposed the present system; and you will compel the Legislature to treat the "School Question," not as a question betwixt Catholics and Protestants, but as a question betwixt the State and the Family—betwixt the civil magistrate, and the parent.

The question at issue in fact is simply this, "To whom does the education of the child belong? to the Family, or to the Government?" and until we can force its discussion upon these grounds, until the "sectarian element" be eliminated, we need never hope for a favorable hearing from the Legislature. Thus it cannot too often be repeated, that the "School Question" is not a priest's question, or a church question; but first, and before all, a father's and mother's question;—one in which parents are primarily interested—because, as before the State, the parents of the child alone have the right to decide how, where, and in what company their children shall be educated.

Unfortunately other counsels have prevailed. Instead of showing themselves interested in the question, and making themselves parties to the strife, the great body of the Catholic laity have stood aloof, and held their peace; leaving their Bishops and clergy to do all the fighting, to receive all the hard blows, and to bear all the insolence and abuse of our common adversaries. This ungenerous and destructive policy has resulted as we anticipated, and as we foretold it would. Our silence upon a matter in which our dearest rights as freemen, and the eternal happiness of our children, are directly and deeply involved, is urged by our enemies as a reason for refusing us justice, and for representing our Bishops and clergy as a set of meddling busybodies; thrusting themselves forward in matters which do not concern them, and intent only upon gratifying their grasping ambition. On the late debate upon Mr. Ferguson's motion, our enemies skilfully availed themselves of the opportunity afforded them by our own misconduct; and there was not in the House, one to stand up to explain the cause of this silence, or to disabuse the minds of our enemies of the false, though very natural impression which that strange silence has made upon them.

Yet the Catholic people of Canada are not indifferent to the evils of "common" Schools, or the blessings of "Freedom of Education;" but they have been too easily duped by the artifices of men who profess themselves their friends, but whose sole object is to use them as their tools. The agitation of the School Question would be embarrassing to the Ministry, therefore, it must be allayed; and for the interests of the Ministry, our rights, the honor of our Priesthood, and the salvation of the souls of our children, must be sacrificed. The Catholic laity were recommended to make no sign; not to petition, not to manifest the slightest interest in the momentous question at issue; and believing that they who thus advised them were their friends, the Catholic laity unfortunately fell victims to the designs of the well trained "government hacks." The fruits of this policy are apparent in the boasts of M. M. Ferguson, Brown and Co., that the Catholics as a body care nothing for "Separate Schools," and that the agitation against them proceeds solely from the arrogance and grasping ambition "of a few clergymen." It concerns the honor of our Catholics, then, that they should dispel this most pernicious illusion as speedily as possible; for so long as it lasts all hopes of obtaining justice must be abandoned. But this illusion can only be effectually dispelled by the Catholic laity themselves taking a prompt and active part in the School controversy, and making their voice heard in the Legislature, in clear, strong, but strictly constitutional accents. This is a duty that we owe to ourselves, to our children—to our Church, and to our God.

"We are of those"—says the Toronto Citizen—"who are strongly impressed with the idea that, as a body in the State, we" (Catholics) "have interests both social and political to establish, or enhance." The TRUE WITNESS is, we are happy to say, of precisely the same opinion; and it is for that very reason that he pursues alone to-day, the course which he once pursued in company with the Catholic Citizen of Toronto, and before the latter had bartered his principles for "Government advertisements."—In an evil hour our Toronto cotemporary listened to the voice of the Ministerial Syren, and since then our respective paths have diverged. We mention this fact, as a gentle reminder to the Citizen that he cannot condemn the policy of the TRUE WITNESS of to-day, without thereby condemning the policy of that Catholic Citizen of Toronto who solemnly pledged himself, in the face of God and man, "to oppose by all constitutional means" every Ministry that refused, or delayed to do, full justice to Catholics on the "School Question."

Education," and the interests, consequently, of our Catholic separate schools. Now, the present Ministry have publicly pledged themselves—and this pledge we believe that they will keep—not to make any concessions to the demands of Catholics upon the "School Question." Not only have the members of the Ministry for the Upper Province given this pledge, but those of the Lower section have done so as well. Thus, we find Mr. Alley reported in the Toronto Colonist of the 18th inst. as solemnly declaring on the debate for abolishing "separate schools" that he "was not desirous of any change in the present system, but wished to maintain it in its integrity," in spite of its glaring injustice towards the Catholics of Upper Canada, and the indignant remonstrances of His Lordship the Bishop of Toronto, and the other Prelates of U. Canada. Now, we must confess that we do not see how the most important of all the "social and political" interests of the Catholic body are to be established or enhanced, by giving a warm support to a body of politicians who have declared that they will not allow those interests to be established or enhanced; and who openly avow their determination to maintain in its integrity, a system utterly incompatible with the "social and political" interests of Catholics.

We therefore conclude that our cotemporary, in the hurry of composition, has been guilty of a trifling error; and that for the the words "social and political," in the passage we have ventured to transcribe from his columns, we should read "personal and pecuniary." By making this slight correction, the language of the Citizen becomes intelligible, and his meaning clear. For though the policy he pursues towards the Ministry is inconsistent, indeed incompatible, with the advancement of the "social and political" interests of Catholics, it is admirably adapted to promote the "personal and pecuniary" interests of the editor and proprietors of the Toronto Catholic Citizen. It is a policy which brings in grist to their mill, in the shape of "Government advertisements," Crown Land "Agencies," &c.; and which must therefore recommend itself strongly to them as the best possible policy for Catholics to pursue. But our cotemporary must excuse us if we still persist in sticking to the old paths; and if we are still determined to pursue the course upon which we started—which we once travelled in company with the Toronto Citizen—and which, since he deserted it, we have travelled alone. Lucrative it may not be; but mature reflection has convinced us that it is the only course which is consistent with the honor, and with the interests—"social and political"—of the Catholics of Canada.

MORE FRAUDS AMONGST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.—Well may our Canadian system of administration be termed "Government by Corruption;" for scarce a day passes in the course of which some fresh fraud, some new iniquity, some novel act of swindling on the part of a Government official, is not brought before the public. Only the other day it was a Government officer of the name of Anderson whose frauds were brought to light; to-day we find in the Toronto correspondence of the Montreal Herald, the following particulars respecting the manner in which the Chief Superintendent of Education for Canada West, the Rev. Mr. Ryerson, has been appropriating the public funds to his own use. In the words of the Herald the story is shortly this:—

"The monies required for the erecting of the Normal School and so forth, have been all paid through the hands of the Rev. Doctor; but by an accident, similar to that by which Mr. Anderson's debentures always had some interest accrued upon them until before they were sold, the Chief Superintendent of Education always had a considerable balance in advance of what was required to pay the tradesmen.—This balance was kept in the Upper Canada Bank; but not on the same terms as those upon which Mr. Hicks used to deposit the Provincial balances. The Doctor knew that principal produced interest, and this interest was only placed to his private account till it amounted to £1500."

The most melancholy feature of this disgraceful business—because showing how generally our public men are tainted with corruption—is to be found in the sequel, as given by the Herald's correspondent. The facts as detailed above having leaked out, the Rev. Mr. Ryerson naturally expected to be called upon to refund the public monies by him applied to his own use, and placed to his private account. But to avoid this, he trumped up a claim to remuneration for certain mysterious services, said to have been rendered in superintending the progress of the buildings; and this "claim" was allowed by the Ministry! Still the fact remains uncontradicted, that public servants in this elysium of swindlers, and fraudulent bankrupts, place the interest accruing from public monies entrusted to their charge, to the credit of their private accounts; and that when detected, they are allowed to escape the punishment due to their frauds, by trumping up counter-claims against the Government which they have defrauded. Happy land this Canada, for cheats, and swindlers of all descriptions!—In England they are consigned to the hulk, clothed ignominiously in grey jackets, and have their hair cropped short, so that they are made a spectacle to men and angels. Here on the contrary, they set up in business as Presidents and