

THE MANITOBA MINORITY.

Rev. Father Marion Indulges in a Comparison

Between the Proposals of the Commissioners and the Laurier-Greenway Settlement.

Some Striking Figures in Regard to the School Attendance.

To the Editor of THE TRUE WITNESS:

With your permission I shall compare and contrast the relative value of the Smith-Dickey-Desjardins "propositions" presented in March last to Messrs Sifton and Cameron, acting in behalf of the Greenway Government, and the Greenway-Laurier "settlement," as published in November last.

The Hon. Premier, in his banquet speech, delivered before an immense audience, which included the elite and most distinguished members of the Liberal party, asked: "What was the difference?"—implying what is the difference—"between the 'propositions' and the 'settlement.'"

The First Minister of the Crown hypocritically assumed that some individual might have the temerity to assert that there was a difference between the proposals of the Dominion Commissioners and the previous concessions formulated by Mr Greenway, and then, with every appearance of candor, asks: "What was the difference?" I shall adopt his own chosen method of comparison and contrast, and, by the same, show the hon. gentleman what is the difference between them.

Were it not forced on me by the gravity and supreme importance of the question, I should not expose the hazardous proofs he introduced to substantiate their alleged equality; yet justice to my coreligionists and allegiance to the cause of Catholic education constrain me to critically examine the nature of the arguments he advanced in support of his contention.

The audience thought they were listening to burning words of eloquence on behalf of the sacred rights of an oppressed minority—never dreaming for a moment that the Hon. Premier was trifling with the truth.

If I use strong language, I think that the hon. gentleman, by the necessity of the circumstances, will admit that I am not too harsh. The hon. gentleman endeavors to give a value to his "settlement" by suppressing the strongest feature of the "propositions." This mode of procedure is an evidence that he has lost all confidence in his own "settlement."

I shall quote the whole of his speech in reference to the "settlement," that the reader may see that my charge, though strong, is minimize rather than exaggerated. He said:—

"But it may be said that there was a difference between the propositions submitted by the Commissioners of the Government of Sir Mackenzie Bowell and the concessions made by Mr. Greenway. What was the difference? Here is the proposition made by the Commissioners of the Dominion Government:—In towns and villages where there are twenty-five Catholic children, the school commissioners will be obliged to furnish a separate school or a separate apartment and a Catholic teacher. Now here is the proposition offered by Mr. Greenway:—Wherever there are ten Catholic children it will be permitted to priests to enter the school, at half-past three o'clock in the afternoon, and give religious teaching. In every municipality where there are ten Catholic children, the school commissioners will be obliged to provide a Catholic teacher and not only to teach religion, but secular matters, such as arithmetic and grammar, as well. Now, that is not all. Wherever there are ten Catholic children, French or English children will be educated in French."

I shall now quote correctly the nine clauses of the Smith-Dickey Desjardins propositions:

1. Legislation shall be passed at the present session of the Manitoba Legislature to provide that in towns and villages where there resided, say, twenty-five Roman Catholic children of school age, and in cities where there are, say, fifty of such children, the board of trustees shall arrange that such children shall have a school house or school room for their own use, where they may be taught by a Roman Catholic teacher; and Roman Catholic parents or guardians, say, ten in number, may appeal to the Department of Education from any decision or neglect of the board in respect of its duty under this clause, and the board shall observe and carry out all decisions and directions of the Department on any such appeal.

2. Provision shall be made by this legislation that schools wherein the majority of children are Catholics should be exempted from the requirements of the regulations as to religious exercises.

3. That text-books be permitted in Catholic schools such as will not offend the religious views of the minority, and which from an educational standpoint shall be satisfactory to the Advisory Board.

4. Catholics to have representation on the Advisory Board.

5. Catholics to have representation on the Board of Examiners appointed to examine teachers for certificates.

6. It is also claimed that Catholics should have assistance in the maintenance of a normal school for the education of their teachers.

7. The existing system of permits to non-qualified teachers in Catholic schools to be continued for, say, two years, to enable them to qualify, and then to be entirely discontinued.

8. In all other respects the schools at which Catholics attend to be public schools and subject to every provision of the Education Acts for the time being in force in Manitoba.

9. A written agreement having been arrived at, and the necessary legislation

passed, the Remedial Bill now before Parliament is to be withdrawn, and any rights and privileges which may be claimed by the minority in view of the decisions of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council shall, during the due observance of such agreement, remain in abeyance and be not further insisted upon."

The reader has now before him clause 1 of the "propositions," the Premier's correct citation of the same clause and the relevant part of the Premier's speech; the "settlement" clauses I have already quoted in my last letter.

In comparing these it is of the utmost importance to carefully distinguish between the three phrases: (1) "Children of school age;" (2) "Children attending school;" and (3) "Average attendance of children at school."

"Children of school age" signifies all children between certain ages in a school district, whether they attend or do not attend school. In Ontario, "children of school age" designates all between the ages of 5 and 21 years. The limiting ages may vary for different provinces.

"Children attending school" means the children whose names are inscribed in the school register. Attendance at school for even one day in the year is all that is required for inscription in the school register.

Quite different from the registered attendance is the average attendance. The average attendance is found by dividing the sum of the number of days each pupil may have attended school during the year by the total number of school days in the year. The average attendance in my last letter is one-fourth of the number of children of school age in the 42 school districts. The average attendance in cities and towns in Ontario is one-tenth of the number of children of school age in these cities and towns.

Children of school age, as to number, are always in excess of those of registered attendance; the number of children registered is always greater than the average attendance.

Now, scan, attentively, clause 1 of the Commissioners' "proposals," and weigh well the meaning of the words italicized, which to the surprise of everybody will be found eliminated in the incorrect citation from the same clause made by the Hon. Premier at his banquet speech, already herein reproduced. This is not all, as I shall further on show that the Premier not only suppressed these very important words in the "propositions," but adapted them in every instance to his own "settlement." No doubt Mr. Greenway, through the poverty of his "settlement," had driven the Premier into this very unpleasant and awkward position.

The gravamen of my charge is, that the Hon. Premier suppresses these most important words, "children of school age," contained, as the reader may readily see, in clause 1 of the "propositions," and, at the same time, introduces them as part of his "settlement," which they are not. By this manipulation of the difference between his mis-statement of the "settlement" and the "settlement" as it actually exists becomes prodigious; and equally great becomes the difference between the Commissioners' proposals as they are in fact and his unjustifiable travesty of the same proposals. This daring procedure rehabilitated his "settlement" almost beyond recognition, at the expense of a grave injustice to the Commissioners.

To prove my charge, that he adapted these decisive words, "children of school age," to his "settlement," I shall invite the reader's attention to the words I have italicized in the report of the Premier's speech. He says:—

"Wherever there are ten Catholic children," etc., leaving the audience to guess in this instance whether these children are children of school age or children in attendance. Moreover, he says: "In every municipality (school district) where there are 25 children belonging to the Catholic Church." And again: "In every town municipality where there are 50 children belonging to the Catholic Church." These are children of "school age"; yet his understood "settlement" specially demands average attendance. The whole value of the "settlement," or any such settlement as regards number of children required to claim rights, necessarily depend on the distinction between children of school age, children in attendance and average attendance. The Dominion Commissioners knew what they were talking about when demanding the rights of the minority, by referring to children of school age. The Hon. Premier would at first sight seem to confound children of school age with children registered on the roll and the number of registered children with the average attendance.

I shall now take the "settlement" as it really exists, without noticing the incorrect statements already exposed in my former letters and compare it with the clauses or proposals already cited from the Smith-Dickey-Desjardins "propositions."

Now, how do the Dominion Commissioners provide for religious instruction in mixed rural districts? In the following manner, as heretofore cited in clause 2 of the "Propositions." One who has not read the discussion, might infer from the clause that Catholic children should be exempted only from the requirements of the regulations as to religious instruction and which are under the control of the Advisory Board.

I will show from the discussion that this is not the correct interpretation, for a quotation of the cross arguments between the delegates of the Greenway Government and the Dominion Commissioners will at once dispel the impression. Mr. Sifton said in reference to clause 2 of the "Propositions":—

"Where a majority of the pupils are Roman Catholics, doctrinal religious teaching, without any restriction or control, might go on at any hour, or all hours. The schools might be in effect, so far as religious teaching is concerned, church schools."

And the Commissioners, in reply thereto, said: "As to clause 2 of our memorandum, your objections could be met by provisions as to detail. If desired, the privilege of teaching religion could be limited to a certain time in the schools attended by Roman Catholics."

Therefore, both the high contending parties, or at least the Commissioners

conceded that when Catholics were in the majority religious teaching would be imparted.

Now, this being promised, the Commissioners gave Catholics in Catholic majority rural schools the right to religious instruction every day of the school year, and, for purposes of argument, say one-half hour daily, which would be 206 1/2 hours. The Greenway Laurier "settlement" gives to the same class of schools for religious instruction 103 1/2 hours, or one-half the time asked by the Commissioners. The supposition here is that Catholic-majority trustees would never restrict the number of days for religious instruction, but by clause 6 of the Laurier "settlement" would be obliged to give Protestants one-half the time allotted, which would be 103 1/2 hours.

The Commissioners do not take into consideration the status of Catholics, as to religious instruction, in Protestant rural districts. They afford Catholics no protection in this respect.

In Protestant majority rural schools the "settlement" gives Catholic children one-half the days that may be specified for religious teaching. That the number of days for religious instruction will be limited in these schools is confirmed by the fact that the electorate of Manitoba has pronounced more than once in favor of secular schools. Moreover, in these schools no Catholic teacher will be on hand to give religious instruction to the few Catholic children attending.

But, when villages, towns and cities are in question, all comparison immediately vanishes.

The comparison between the "proposals" and "settlement," has heretofore been confined to religious instruction in rural schools.

It has been often stated that the Commissioners did not extend religious teaching to the rural schools, but I think in such schools it will be acknowledged, for reasons already assigned, that the "propositions" provide more amply for religious instruction of Catholics than does the "settlement."

Clause 1 of the "Proposals," by asking for a Catholic teacher, and school-room implies, without the shadow of a doubt, religious teaching.

This is confirmed by clause 2 of the "Proposals" as understood by the two high contending parties.

The demand of the Commissioners was that these schools were to be maintained in villages, towns and cities, out of the public funds of their respective municipalities. Under such conditions, it is morally certain that almost all the Catholic children would attend these schools.

Now, the "Proposals" give to Catholic children religious instruction by a Catholic teacher each school day of the year, in villages and towns, where there are 25 Catholic children of school age, and in cities where there are 50 Catholic children of school age. On the other hand the "Settlement" gives to Catholic children religious instruction only one-half hour on one-half of the school days in the year, and this in most instances without the assistance of a Catholic teacher.

But when the powers of restriction as seen in clause 4, the petitions which may be required, and the absence of a Catholic teacher in Protestant majority schools, are considered, comparison ceases. The one obtains separate schools in villages, towns and cities, wherein Catholic children could be taught religion almost ad libitum; while the other obtains in such places secular schools with a modicum of religious instruction on certain days.

The atmosphere of the one is Catholic; the other Protestant.

The one gathers the Catholic children together for instruction religious and secular; the other scatters them among the different schools of towns and cities. I will not dwell longer on the contrast between the "proposals" and the "settlement." Enough has been said to convince the reader of the vast disparity which can even at first sight be observed between them.

I shall now take clause 5 as found in the "Settlement," and not as incorrectly quoted by Mr. Laurier. This clause, as far as Catholic interests are concerned, is for the purpose of securing Catholic teachers. The Greenway-Laurier "settlement," considered in itself, stands or falls on its merits or defects; and the religion clauses, with whatever value they may possess, also entirely depend upon the extra Catholic teachers this clause may secure.

This clause, 5, enacts that in rural and village school districts where there are 25 Catholic children of average attendance, and towns and cities where there are 40 Catholic children of average attendance, the trustees shall employ at least one duly certificated Roman Catholic teacher in such school. I will consider rural districts first. I have proven in former letters from exact statistics for the County of Renfrew that in the 42 mixed rural schools in which a Catholic teacher is engaged an average of 25 implies almost 67 children on the roll or register. Taking the proportion between roll or register attendance and children of school age the 67 children will imply at least 100 children of school age. If then the Greenway-Laurier "settlement" were applied to the 42 schools referred to as having a Catholic teacher, this settlement would say: "Wherever there are in a rural school district 100 Catholic school children of school age the trustees shall be obliged to engage a Catholic school teacher."

It will be readily observed that wherever there are 100 Catholic children in a school district, of school age, that Catholics will necessarily be in an overwhelming majority and independent of the settlement. And therefore the "settlement" would not secure one teacher more than the Commissioners' "proposals" as implied in clause 2 of the "Propositions."

The Greenway-Laurier settlement requires for a Catholic teacher in villages twenty-five Catholic children of average attendance.

There is no means of obtaining, at least from the report of '95 and '94, statistics for villages in Ontario, for these are included in rural schools.

But I shall give to the "settlement" full justice and will adopt their proportion between average attendance and children of school age, as found in towns and cities in the Province of Ontario. The proportion is 2-25. Multiply then the twenty-five of average as required by

the "settlement" by 2 25, and the result is sixty children of school age. The Commissioners, on the other hand, required only 25 children of school age to have a Catholic teacher and a Catholic school. The "settlement" for towns requires 40 children of average attendance; the Commissioners, 25 children of school age. Multiply again, 40 of average by two and a half, and the result will be 100 Catholic children. The "settlement" says: In towns you must have 40 of school age and the Commissioners 25 of school age to secure a Catholic teacher. For cities the "settlement" requires 96 Catholic children of school age, the Commissioners 30 children of school age, to secure a Catholic teacher. I wonder whether with those contrasts before him the Premier will now venture to ask: What was (is) the difference? between the proposals of the Commissioners and his settlement.

I shall in my next letter continue the contrast, for more salient points of difference than even those referred to await consideration. I think that the impartial reader will consider the comparison between the "settlement" and the Desjardins Dickey-Smith "proposition" as a comparison between the lordly oak and a withered briar bush.

I am criticising, and not constructing the settlement, for the acceptance or non-acceptance of a question pertaining to religion depends on our ecclesiastical superiors. In matters purely political you and I are entirely free to agree or disagree.

I earnestly appeal to the Hon. Premier for the sake of his countrymen and their lawful rights not to allow this settlement to be placed in the statute books of Manitoba.

I do not like the Premier's classical allusion to the Tarpelin flock, when he declares, in response to the taunts of his political opponents: "Nor does it frighten me." It is a pretentious and fatal spot for the last historical man who stood there had been found guilty of treachery to his country, and rather than face the sentence pronounced on him, cast himself headlong from its dizzy height. This ought not to be, Hon. Premier, your chosen position, thought taunted by your opponents. Be allotted to stand on that fatal rock. Descend, I pray you, from the Capitoline, and listen to the weak and plaintive voice of your oppressed and down-trodden kinsmen, the strong and more imperative voice of your Church, whom you say you love and revere, and the voice of the Constitution of your country, which you have promised, and even sworn, to uphold. All beseech you to descend from that ill-fated rock to the pass of Thermopylae, and like the valiant Leonidas of old, stand or fall, as the case may be, in defending the rights of your countrymen.

It is not yet the eleventh hour: and if you select the latter position rather than the former, you shall be acclaimed by all sincere Catholics and liberal-minded Protestants, irrespective of party, as a hero in the presence of difficulties and a Goliath in defence of the bulwarks of our Constitution.

DOUGLAS, Ont. H. S. MARION, P.P.

[CONTINUED FROM SECOND PAGE]

THE HOTEL DIEU.

In the operating-room of the Hotel Dieu all modern requisites are to be found; and the cabinets filled with hideous growths, plaster casts of strange protuberances, minute bones and foreign substances, speak silently but eloquently of human misery relieved by surgical triumphs.

Passing through the different wards an air of home comfort and contentment seems to surround the invalids. The two long lines of curtained beds standing out from the white walls are comfortable and inviting in appearance. Each ward has its little shrine, bright with lights and flowers, and here and there are groups of convalescents chatting together or occupied with some attractive employment. There are two wards for Irish patients—St. Patrick's and St. Bridget's, and here the shrines and pictures are of Erin's patron saints. A well stocked library supplies suitable reading for those able to enjoy it, and long balconies make suitable promenades for those strong enough to venture outside.

Within the hospital are many private rooms furnished brightly and tastefully for pay patients, and in one of the pretty apartments, where all that can add to the comfort of an invalid is provided, is an old lady who has just celebrated her 100th birthday. The kind nuns decorated the chamber of the venerable centenarian in honor of the event, and she was the recipient of many congratulations from visitors and inmates during that day.

The chapel of the hospital is very beautiful in its chaste simplicity of design and ornament. Over the altar there is a magnificent painting of St. Ignatius torn by lions in the amphitheatre of Rome. Above this again is a fac-simile of the picture of the Holy Family that was instrumental in the conversion and subsequent vocation of Gen. Ethan Allen's daughter, who died a nun of the Hotel Dieu. The original hangs in the cloistered chapel of the nuns.

One of the most interesting departments of the hospital is the Pharmacy, where all the medicines used in the institution are to be found arranged with an order, neatness, and daintiness that our most modern and splendid drug stores have not yet attained. The dispenser in charge is an experienced chemist and prepares the medicines daily prescribed by the attending physicians. Her large stock of drugs is kept in pretty jars with wash labels, arranged in massive cabinets, that line the walls of the two attractive rooms. Over one of these receptacles two quaint pots, in which herbs were infused under the ancient code of physics, now bear a burden of beautiful autumn leaves, so natural in form and color, that it is hard to believe that they are not the well preserved work of nature, but a skillful copy from the artistic fingers of the busy apothecary.

The secretary's office is another point of interest, and all the records and statistics of the hospital are carefully kept by

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a novel and very satisfactory system of book-keeping followed by the sister in charge. The consulting rooms and parlors are in keeping with the rest of the building, bright and neat and appropriately furnished. In the basement are the kitchen, wash-rooms, store-rooms and cellars, kitchen, heating apparatus, etc. The linen room had a fresh, pleasant odor, and the piles on piles and rows on rows of neatly labelled linens, give some idea of the extent of the hospital and labor required in supplying the beds with necessary covering. Fifty-six nuns to-day occupy the Hotel Dieu and follow in the footsteps of their forefathers, Jeanne Mance, devoting all their energies to the poor and suffering, and ready to face death and disease for love of Him who gave His life to redeem our souls down in Transilvania, among the lepers, the Hotel Dieu nuns are laboring quietly among the stricken victims of that loathsome disease, for no sacrifice is too great for the Spouse of Christ, when the Will of God requires it. The spirit of love and tender compassion that inspires the labors of the nuns pervades the wards and corridors of the Hotel Dieu, and supplies a solace for the sufferer that emanates from religion and cannot be purchased by gold. Catholics find it a true haven of repose where all the blessings of their Holy Faith are provided by sympathetic hearts and hands and the soft, low, prayerful accents of the religiouse have won back many an impatient soul before death snatched it from its mortal covering.

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

Preparing to Attend the Meeting at Paris to Elect a Superior-General

The General Chapter of Christian Brothers will shortly convene at Paris to elect a successor to the late Bro. Joseph, Superior-General of the Order.

Brother Maurice, president of Rock Hill College, Maryland, accompanied by Brother Christian, provincial of the Baltimore district, Brothers Justine and Quintin, New York; Paulian and Emory, St. Louis; Bethelen and Gubern, San Francisco, and Bothot, Santa Fe, sailed from New York last week.

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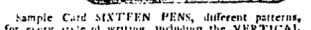
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