

THE SCHOOL QUESTION.

The Opinions of Several Prominent Citizens.

Everyone Seems to Agree With "The True Witness" in the Stand it has Taken—Some Strong Views Upon the Subject.

As stated in an editorial in our last issue we were unable to publish, owing to limited space, the interviews which we have had on this subject of the appointments upon the Catholic School Board. In justice to the gentlemen who were kind enough to express their opinions, we feel it our duty to give their remarks in this issue. We are anxious that the Government may understand that when the TRUE WITNESS sees fit to take up the cause of its people, it has their support and approbation.

MR. OWEN M'GARVEY'S OPINION.

Being asked his views on this subject, Mr. Owen McGarvey stated that he was in thorough harmony with our attitude and that he considers it an act of great injustice that Mr. Hart should have been over-looked on the occasion of the appointment in question. He believes that it was an act of unfairness both of that gentleman and to the Irish-Catholic population. Moreover, he does not believe in a law that seems to lay down as a qualification of Commissioner on a Common School Board that of being a university man.

MR. FLANNERY SPEAKS.

Mr. P. Flannery, of Notre Dame street, when interviewed, spoke as follows:—

Yes, I fully endorse the action of the TRUE WITNESS in regard to the Government's disregard of our rights in the School question. I agree with the TRUE WITNESS, because it faithfully echoes the sentiments of the Irish-Catholics. Mr. Flannery believes that there must be some reason that has not been made public for the dismissal of Mr. Hart, in favor of Dr. Brennan, for if the Government have good reason for dismissing him now, they had even better for not electing in the first instance, especially as the new law, which reads, "the School Commissioner shall be a member of a university as much as possible," does not require his removal. Mr. Hart is a representative Irish Catholic; Dr. Brennan is not, and the resolve of the Irish people is to be represented by a true Irish Catholic.

WHAT MR. H. J. KAVANAGH, Q.C., SAYS:

"What do I think of the appointment of Dr. Brennan on the School Commission in the place of Mr. Hart? I consider that,—because English speaking Catholics form so small a minority of the Catholic population, because our English speaking clergy, overburdened with work, are too few to look after our educational interests unassisted, and because what we want often differs very much from the educational wants of French Canadians,—it is of the very highest importance to us that we should be represented on the School Commission by an active, independent and practical business man, who knows what we want and is constant in his determination to get it. Mr. Hart is all this, and has proved it, and I know of no one so well fitted to represent us on the School Commission.

Like the greater number of Irish Catholics here, I have not the advantage of knowing Dr. Brennan. I believe, however, that he is a clever physician and a very estimable man,—that he does credit to his Irish origin, but that his life-long associations have effected the not very difficult operation, when sufficient time is given, and the subject is caught young, by which an Irish boy has grown up to manhood and become an excellent French Canadian.

It is conceded on all sides that one of the three commissioners named by the Lieutenant-Governor should be an Irish Catholic. If then this is our right I consider it unfair that this place of ours should be filled by a gentleman whose name is the only thing Irish about him. The Doctor's name is undoubtedly a very good Irish name. But what would the French Canadians say if some post, half as important to them as this is to us, should be given, for instance, to Dr. Guerin as their representative? It would

be all very fine to tell them that they should be delighted, that Dr. Guerin speaks French, that his is a most unexceptionable French name and that he is a member of Laval University. La Presse, La Patrie, Le Monde, La Minerve, every French newspaper in the city, would very properly denounce the appointment, simply because Dr. Guerin is not a French Canadian. Such a case, however, could never happen, for I'm sure that Dr. Guerin would never attempt to rob French Canadians of their right, and that, if appointed to such a position, he would resign as soon as he realized that the French Canadians did not require his services.

As to blaming the Government in this matter, I cannot see how this can be done with any reason or with any fairness. The statute passed last session directs that the Lieutenant Governor, on the recommendation of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, shall appoint three Commissioners, chosen as much as possible from among the members of the Montreal universities. Dr. Brennan is a professor of Laval, and his name is so distinctively Irish that the Government should not be blamed if they took him to be an Irish Catholic and appointed him on the recommendation of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Why it was that the Superintendent did this is another question, with which the Council of Public Instruction may have something to say.

This new law is certainly very objectionable. We have no university of our own. It is by mere good fortune that there are at present three English speaking Catholic professors at the universities here. But if we were sure of always having so many it is still grossly unfair to limit the choice to three. When the bill was before the House it should have been strenuously fought, and now that it has become law it should be changed at the next session of the Legislature. In the meantime, if I may offer a suggestion, it would be that Dr. Brennan should resign. The office can offer him nothing but responsibility, labour, and loss of valuable time for which no one will thank him.

There is one point on which I wish to be clearly understood. Not one of us imagines that Dr. Brennan has been appointed in the French-Canadian interest as opposed to ours, for there is no contention between English speaking and French-speaking Catholics. It is not quite true to say that Dr. Brennan's appointment is not acceptable to us because he is a French-Canadian; but we are not satisfied because, not being one of us, he cannot understand our wants as well as we ourselves do. An Irish Catholic is best fitted to look after the interests of the Irish-Catholic school children, and for this reason we insist on our right; nothing can be simpler.

MR. W. McNALLY SPEAKS.

Mr. McNally endorses the stand taken by THE TRUE WITNESS, and says that in replacing Mr. Hart by Dr. Brennan—a man unknown to the Irish and French in sympathy—the Government has done us a great injustice, and it only remains for us to fight to have our claims recognized. "I do not see," said Mr. McNally, "how I can conscientiously give my support to a Government which so persistently ignores the rights of the Irish people. Since Mr. Hart became a member of the School Commissioners our interests, as far as he could make them, have been looked after better than they ever were, and it is an injustice to remove, on such slight pretext, a man who was so trusted by the people he was called upon to represent."

MR. B. TANSEY INTERVIEWED.

When interviewed, Mr. B. Tansey said:—

I am very proud of the stand taken by THE TRUE WITNESS in reference to Mr. Hart's dismissal, and fully endorse its editorials in the matter. Mr. Hart is an able man, and a man who fully represents the Irish Catholics; and to choose a man because his name is Irish is the height of absurdity. There are dozens of men in the Province with Irish names who are French Canadians, many of whom cannot speak a word of English. If the board are resolved to have professors of a university, why were not Dr. Hingston, Dr. Guerin or Judge Doherty approached. No reason has been given to us for overlooking these men and other Irish Catholic professional men. The Irish Catholics look upon this as a slight, therefore, and are determined to

agitate until they obtain redress. Mr. Taillon must have been under some misapprehension in this matter, as in general he has been a good friend to the Irish people. Mr. Brennan is, personally, a thorough gentleman, but he does not represent the Irish people. Mr. Semple and Mr. Murphy were two thorough Irishmen whom we were proud to have on the board. Of Mr. Hart we were equally proud, and we consider him the most fitting to succeed them. We Irish Catholics are thus vehement in the matter, because to us it is one of vital importance. The wise representation of our interests on the School Commission is not only a matter of the present, but it deeply concerns the welfare of our future men and women.

MR. EDWARD ELLIOT.

Mr. Elliot, of Bleury street, commends the action of THE TRUE WITNESS, and fully endorses its sentiments in the matter. He believes that the injustice that has been done to the Irish Catholics can only be provided against in the future by the people having the right to elect their own representatives on the School Board. "We must agitate," said Mr. Elliot, "and show the Government how entirely unanimous we are in the matter. We have every right to that which we demand and we are resolved make our claim recognized. We wish to be represented by an Irish Catholic; we have plenty quite eligible. Dr. Guerin, Dr. Hingston, Judge Doherty, are professors and we have half a dozen more professional men should they be required, why were they not requested to represent us?"

MR. SHAUGHNESSY.

Mr. Shaughnessy, Notre Dame street, says:—

I fully sympathize with the action taken by the TRUE WITNESS and consider that the Government, in substituting Mr. Brennan for Mr. Hart, have ignored the rights of the Irish people in the most positive manner. Mr. Hart was an excellent man to represent us and he had the confidence of the whole Irish Catholics of the city.

MR. P. O'BRIEN IS INDIGNANT.

Mr. P. O'Brien, of St. Patrick street, expressed great indignation at the manner in which the Government has overlooked our rights in selecting Dr. Brennan, a French-Canadian, to represent us. Mr. O'Brien says we should not allow this matter to drop on any account, now that it has been taken up so well. Mr. Hart represented us fully and there was nothing but a paltry reason for his removal. In this matter we are not fighting only on behalf of Mr. Hart, for there are many other Irish Catholics capable of representing us. The action of the Government in selecting a French Canadian leads one to believe that they must have some particular secret reason for doing so.

WHAT MR. QUAIN SAYS.

"We must keep at the Government until we get redress," said Mr. E. Quain. "The matter is a serious one, and if we let this injustice pass without raising our voices to prevent it, greater injustices will be forced on to us and the Government will have every cause to ignore our rights, for they will be assured that we shall not publicly resent any thing they may force upon us. I am glad to see a spirit of unanimity in this matter, and the bold action of the TRUE WITNESS deserves every commendation. We don't wish our Irish Catholic children to be looked over and their educational wants provided by a French Canadian; we wish to be represented by an Irishman, and we will fight until we gain our end."

J. ALTY.

I do not think the removal of Mr. Hart from the Board of Catholic School Commissioners can be satisfactorily explained by the Quebec Government. The plea that their hands were tied by the provisions of the new statute is not sufficient. The representative of any particular section of our community should certainly be in close touch with the people whose interests he is elected or appointed to watch over. Now this cannot be said of Dr. Brennan—a highly esteemed French Canadian gentleman with a genuine Irish cognomen. Then why place this respected doctor in the anomalous position of representing a class of people with whom he has never

identified himself in any public manner, and of whose educational wants or requirements he cannot be expected to have a very wide knowledge. To be frank about it, I look upon the appointment of Dr. Brennan as an attempt to mislead the Irish Catholic portion of our community, and if THE TRUE WITNESS had not thrown its searchlight upon the dark spot, it would probably never have been noticed. It would seem as if Mr. Hart was a very strong man, when, in order to remove him from the Board, it was found necessary to amend the law relating to the appointment of the school commissioners. From an intellectual stand-point, it is generally admitted that he was fully capable of discharging the duties incumbent upon him as a school commissioner; from a business point of view, he is conceded to be in the front rank; as a man of sterling integrity, he appears to stand high in the estimation of those who enjoy his personal acquaintance—what more is wanting. But he is not a university man! I consider it unfair to the whole Irish Catholic population of Montreal that this bar of exclusiveness should be set up. Irish Catholic parents and guardians are deeply interested in this question, and should not allow it to rest until such time as their chosen representative (whether it be Mr. Hart or some other equally acceptable person) is placed on the Board to look after their interests. Failing immediate redress, every possible legitimate effort should be made to have the "Act relating to the appointment of Catholic School Commissioners" so amended, at next session, as to secure to the Irish Catholic community their full share of recognition, not only on the School Board, but in all promotions and appointments in the gift of the Government.

ST. PATRICK'S T. A. AND B. SOCIETY.

The regular meeting of the above society was held Sunday afternoon and was largely attended. Mr. M. Sharkey, vice-president, occupied the chair. The pledge of total abstinence was administered to five persons by the Rev. Father McCallen, S.S. The secretary, Mr. Costigan, reported progress on the forthcoming anniversary of Father Mathew, to be held in October and a special committee was appointed to further the necessary arrangements. The quarterly audit report, which showed the society to be in a flourishing condition, was submitted and approved. Considerable business of routine character was disposed of, after which the meeting was brought to a close. A meeting of the committee of management was held subsequently, Mr. John Walsh in the chair, but only routine business was transacted.

TAKE RELIGIOUS VOWS.

At the Convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph, St. Hyacinthe, lately, the Archbishop of Druzupara received the religious vows of Sister Mary Euphrasie (Rose Parks, of New York) and Sister St. Leon (Aglae Cloutier, Iberville.) On the same day the Reverend Mother St. Anne was elected superior for the space of three years.

ST. ANTHONY'S YOUNG MEN'S PICNIC POSTPONED.

St. Anthony's Young Men's picnic, which should have taken place on Thursday last, was obliged to be postponed on account of the unfavorable weather. The young men have now fixed August 18th as the date for the excursion, and if the weather is fine, as everyone hopes it will be, the young men and their friends will not lose by the delay. The tickets that were sold for August the 9th will of course hold good on the 18th.

ROUGHS JUSTLY PUNISHED.

The roughs who attacked the excursionists at the C. O. F. picnic on June 16th and injured several persons, have been arrested and found guilty of malicious assault. They were most of them fined 20 dollars and costs.

This summary treatment will doubtless remind them to restrain their ruffianly inclinations on future occasion. The proprietors of Clarke's Island have made provision for the prevention of any similar disturbance in future on their property.