

THE TORONTO WORLD

THURSDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 2, 1892.

RELIGIOUS TEACHING IN SCHOOLS.

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THE LAST SPEAKER OF THE DEPUTATION WAS MR. LAING.

and it is not doing him too much honor to say that he is head and front of the whole movement. He pestered his own syndicate until it acceded to his request, some members who differ from him declining to take a stand against him through fear of being misunderstood. He has for years bored the public on the subject through the newspapers and even since the interview he has commenced trailing his clerical coat in the columns of the Mail which has already made this a party political question and is glad enough to use him as a cat's paw. Mr. Laing asserted in his speech, and repeats the assertion in his letter, that in this province when he asks that the giving up of part of the school time to the reading and studying of the protestant bible shall be made compulsory by law in all schools. Here we distinctly join issue with him on the facts and defy him to prove his assertions true. It is too much to expect a law that has been working without alteration on this point for a quarter of a century, or more, to be suddenly changed at the instance of a few men who assume, without furnishing a particle of proof, that they are endorsed by a majority of the laity. Even if the majority of the people wanted to have such a law made obligatory that would not make it just, but if a vast majority do favor a change there are ways in which the fact can be demonstrated.

WE HAVE SAID THAT WHAT MR. LAING AND HIS PARTY WANT IS TO HAVE THE PROTESTANT BIBLE READ AND STUDIED IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND TO HAVE IT MADE COMPULSORY ON ALL TEACHERS AND TRUSTEES TO SEE THAT THIS IS DONE.

That this is not mistaking his position is clear from his letter to the Mail, in which he says: "But we are told that of 5157 public schools reported in 1890, 14,300 the religious exercises were, but that is not what we 'protestant desire.' We wish our children taught to read the text and for themselves, to be familiar with the text and to know and understand the facts and precepts which Christian duty and duty are founded on."

DOMINION AND PROVINCIAL POWERS.

The very council in England held recently, in a case which has been taken from New Brunswick, that the Canada temperance act of 1875 was within the powers of the dominion legislature; that it was not an interference with those vested in the provincial legislatures; that it is an act dealing with public wrongs rather than civil rights; that it is a matter of general not merely of a local or a private nature in the province, and that it affects the revenues of a province it is only incidental. It is thus settled that the dominion parliament has a right to pass a prohibitory law. But a further question arises. Has the dominion parliament alone the power to pass a prohibitory law? That was the question presented to our court of appeal during a case which came before us during the present month at Quebec. The present month at Quebec. The corporation of Three Rivers, appellant, and Saulte, respondent, which we notice in a recent issue of the Legal News. The unanimous judgment of the court, which was pronounced by Mr. Justice Lamont, was to the effect that a prohibitory law—for example, an act empowering a municipality to make bylaws prohibiting the sale of liquor, or allowing its sale under certain conditions, is within the powers of the local legislature—that the power of the dominion parliament to pass a general prohibitory liquor law as incident to its right to legislate as to public wrongs, is not incompatible with a right in the provincial legislatures to pass prohibitory liquor laws incidental to municipal institutions. In arriving at this conclusion the court was guided by the fact that the confederation of the provinces at the time of the confederation, as it appeared that by the municipal systems in force in Upper and Lower Canada and in Nova Scotia prohibitory powers were possessed by the municipal authorities.

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