

school law. It had recently become exceedingly complicated, and legal gentlemen themselves were greatly divided as to its interpretation. It was his opinion that the necessity for amendment was not so great as generally supposed, if it only were consolidated. He looked upon our school system with considerable pride. But, considering the liberality with which the people of the country had given money to its support, he did not think the results were equal to what might have been expected. He thought that the system aimed too high, endeavouring rather to impart information than to prepare the mind for the acquirement of that information. The cast-iron rule that certain standards must be applied to all scholars alike, be their capacities for the matter taught what they liked, should be modified and made more elastic; yet the Inspector dictated to the master that such and such things should be taught to all alike. A system of greater option, which would excite the reasoning powers of children, was required; and where a master was to be found who disregarded to some extent the cast-iron rules to which he referred, and taught a child that for which it was best fitted by nature, the results were found much more satisfactory than where the rule was strictly observed. He thought the same principle would apply to High Schools, and he was of opinion that more attention should be paid to subjects which would benefit our young men when they went into the commerce and business of the country than was presently paid, and less to classics and elementary subjects. He approved of a reconstruction of the Council of Public Instruction, but thought it might as well have been provided that the Governor-in-Council should have the selection of such men as might be suitable to represent the teaching profession at the Board, instead of by popular election as proposed. He suggested some amendment to the 32nd and 38th clause, as also to the clause providing for the superannuation of old and worn out men. He did not think well, either, of the proposed amendment regarding Inspectors.

Mr. SEXTON was glad that the law was to be consolidated, but would have been better satisfied if it had been consolidated before it was brought down. He was glad of the spirit in which both sides of the House approached the question, and hoped it would be maintained throughout. He differed from the hon. member who preceded him as regards the constitution of the Council of Public Instruction, and thought the selection of its members should never be in the hands of any Governor-in-Council. He advocated the formation of a portfolio in connection with education, giving the Minister a seat in the House, and he opposed the proposal to support High Schools by taxation and Government equivalent. After some reference to section 29, which, to some extent, he defended, and with regard to the power proposed to be given to Reeves and Deputy Reeves to form new school sections, he thought it was practically the same thing as at present existed, to which some exception might be taken. He pointed out several faults which existed in the present law, and he regarded the powers which Mr. Blake's Government took in regard to the management of the school law as arbitrary, adding that it created an immense amount of dissatisfaction. He considered the law unnecessary as far as school accommodation was concerned, and was in favour of a consolidation of the school laws. He would be compelled to vote against the Bill unless the amendments he had suggested were adopted.

Mr. MONK, after referring to the importance of the subject, said he would be in favour of the doing away with the Council of Public Instruction altogether. He agreed with the suggestions of the hon. member for Stormont, and had no doubt that the Bill would be satisfactorily amended when it was brought down from the Special Committee.

Dr. CLARKE (Norfolk) spoke in high terms of the labour the leader of the Government had bestowed upon the Bill, and said the Council of Public Instruction was in great disfavour in the country. There was a strong feeling everywhere in favour of a Bureau of Education, for by the present Constitution of the Council the wants of the rural districts were not known. He complained that the curriculum was too high in the Common Schools, and this created a dislike of the studies by the pupils. He characterized the *Journal of Education* as a learned nuisance, and stated it was scarcely ever read. While they were upon the subject of grants, he thought something might be done to aid the medical branch of education. The 32nd clause would not give satisfaction in its

present shape. The proposition to obtain sites in a compulsory way struck him at first as somewhat new, but he trusted it would become law. He protested against compulsory education in rural districts. It was a nuisance to the people, who, in fact, were desirous to prepare their children for school during the winter months. Every effort was made to give their children a smattering, at least, of education, and he would suggest a separate clause exempting rural districts if it were necessary that the provision should relate to towns and cities. He congratulated the Premier upon the legislation in respect to the superannuation fund, and thought great injustice had been done to many old teachers by depriving them of their certificate. With regard to superintendents and inspectors, he would suggest that townships should be permitted to appoint their own inspector or superintendent.

Mr. WOOD (Victoria) referred to the difficulty of bringing down a measure that would meet the views of the whole House, and proceeded to allude to the fund which had been formed with regard to inspectors, and especially in the eastern portion of the Province. He thought the office of inspector had been a success, and had found those officers desirous of doing all they could for the trustees and others with whom they were brought into contact. In reference to the compulsory erection of school houses, he thought they had a right of insisting that suitable school houses should be constructed, for it was conducive to the health of the pupils. He was in favour of the elective principle of the Bill which referred to the Council of Public Instruction, but he was opposed to High School teachers and inspectors having a seat at that Council. He was not so much averse to Public School teachers being represented at the Council. He would suggest the same rule should be carried out as it is at present—that of the County Council supplementing the Government grants by one half. Liberality to High Schools would be generally received with great favour. In relation to the Book Depository he showed the reasons which gave rise to its establishment. He thought the provision introduced by the Premier in this Bill gave all the liberty and protection that was required. The advantage of having this Book Depository was that the Council of Public Instruction prescribed the books to be used, and decided what prices should be charged for them. He advocated the establishment of a bureau of Education. This, he thought, would facilitate the conduct of school matters, and give the public increased confidence in the department. The general provisions of the Act could not be made applicable to the outlying districts, where houses were miles apart, and where the schools were too poor to maintain a teacher. He suggested that a liberal provision should be made to enable the Government to make grants of maps and charts to these poor schools, and that the same qualification should not be exacted from teachers for schools in these districts. He was averse to the elective system as proposed and thought the Government should give the selection of candidates to the County Councils, or come down to the House with the names of members they desired to propose.

Mr. CHISHOLM thought, on the whole, the Bill was a good one, and was pleased it was to be referred to a Special Committee. He regarded with pleasure the unbiased manner in which the discussion had been conducted, and he was satisfied that when the Bill was returned from the Special Committee it would commend itself to the mass of the people. He had presented a petition from his county, proposing the abolition of the present Council of Public Instruction, and the appointment of a Minister of Education, responsible to the House and the country. That certainly would be a sweeping change, but there was not the least doubt that some steps would have to be taken for changing the constitution of the Council. He had not the slightest doubt that the representation as proposed would understand the wants of the country better than those who at present composed the Council, and he was glad to see that the hardship of no allowing children to go to the nearest schools was to be remedied. He pointed out that no provision was made in the Bill to provide for High School accommodation where it was required, and he thought it would be necessary that this point should be borne in mind. He was of opinion that the Bill, when amended, would redound to the credit of the Government. (Hear, hear)

Mr. GIBSON referred to the necessity of consolidation and simplification of the school law, and was in favour of popular representation in the Council of Public Instruction. He eulogized the character and services of the gentleman at the head of the Council.