

822
They had spoken of other things. For instance, a great deal had been said about the present mode of conducting the inspections of Public Schools being objectionable. In Dr. Ryerson's time he appointed Inspectors of the High Schools to do duty as Inspectors of Public Schools. Everybody admitted, and must as the result of experience admit, that the inspection of schools was essential to the efficiency of the schools. No one could question that at all. If they were to have efficient schools they must have thorough inspection, and have it by capable men. The inspection, as he had already said, was in the first instance performed by the High School Inspectors, and the reason another system of inspection was substituted was that the duties of High School Inspectors were so large that they could not discharge the additional duties of inspecting the Separate Schools. All their time was needed for High School purposes. All their time was needed for their own inspection, and the Government recognised the necessity of making a change.

Mr. Meredith—Why were not the Public School Inspectors asked to perform the work?

The Attorney-General—I will come to that next, but the hon. member is in such a tremendous hurry. (Laughter.) He would answer that at once by explaining what they actually did. They provided some independent Inspectors for Separate Schools instead of increasing the number of Public School Inspectors to do the work. Dr. Ryerson, whose great experience in all matters relating to education constituted him one of the highest authorities on everything connected therewith, thought that to appoint Public School Inspectors for the work was not the best way of dealing with the difficulty. The Government upon his advice appointed Separate School Inspectors apart altogether from the Public School Inspectors. And the men selected for the office were Roman Catholics; and they did so for various reasons. The men they selected were men of energy, men of experience, men of zeal; men well qualified in every way to do the work, and men who were interested in doing the work in the best possible way. Surely every one would see that competent men of their own religion would have far greater influence in the schools than Protestants would have even if they were equally efficient, and that they would be far more likely than anybody else to increase the efficiency of the schools. The same thing applied of course to the Protestant Schools, and he did not know any case in which a Roman Catholic was appointed Inspector of Public Schools. The parents and guardians of Protestant children would feel that much more would be done by a Protestant Inspector in their schools than by a Roman Catholic. The Government wanted to make the Separate Schools as efficient as possible, as it was their duty to do, and they thought they could do it more effectually by appointing Roman Catholic Inspectors than by appointing Protestants. (Hear, hear.) One hon. member complained, and perhaps more than one complained, that the salaries of Separate School Inspectors were paid out of the public treasury. But it must be remembered that throughout the whole Province, from east to west, there were only two Inspectors for Separate Schools, and if they were not men of exceptional energy and ability they could not do the work at all. As a matter of fact the complaint was not well founded. They were partly paid by the Province and partly from a fund to which Roman Catholics contributed. If they entered into a calculation of how much they would have to pay to Public School Inspectors, they would find that the amount contributed by the treasury to the salaries of the Separate School Inspectors was not more than they would have to pay to the additional Public School Inspectors who would be required to do the work. Practically, the Separate School Inspectors were paid for by the Roman Catholics out of their own money. Considering the efficiency of the Separate Schools, he maintained that the most desirable thing to do was to appoint these Inspectors. (Cheers.) There was another point that hon. members complained about, and that was that in the Act of 1879 provision was made for creating Separate Schools into Model Schools. The section relating to this provided: "The Education Department may authorise a Separate School in any county to be constituted a Model School for the training of teachers for Separate Schools, subject to the regulations of the Department, and where in any county such Model School has been established, or from the special circumstances of the Separate Schools therein the Minister of Education should deem it expedient, he may recommend for appointment by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council some one competent person, possessing qualifications prescribed by the Education Department, to be a member of the County Board of Examiners of such county in addition to the number now authorised, and who shall possess and discharge the like powers and duties as the other members of the Board." Objection had been made to this, and how many of these schools had been established? Although there had been an enactment passed, there was not one in existence, nor had there ever been one.

Mr. Meredith—That is a small matter.

The Attorney-General—My hon. friend says this is a small matter, but at most everything that he has raised upon the statute had been small matters. But he wished to point out that there could be no grievance as regards these Model Schools, for the Separate Schools had furnished no Model Schools. He knew of no district that had taken advantage of this law. The Attorney-General then dealt with the powers of legislation in respect to Separate Schools, provided under the Constitution. There were difficulties, he said, in applying the constitutional law to the various cases as they arose. He thought it was perfectly clear, although they had passed regulations and although they might amend the statutes, that they had no power to stop religious instruction.

Mr. Meredith—Where does the hon. gentleman find a word about religious instruction in the whole of the Act?

The Attorney-General said the hon. gentleman knew perfectly well that the Denominational Schools or Separate Schools were established for that, and the Act provided that the Legislature had no power to interfere with the existing rights of any class as regards religious instruction. He had no doubt whatever that the Privy Council would hold that the House had no jurisdiction, no power to

interfere with the rights conferred under the provisions of the Acts bearing upon religious instruction. There were several points in the bills introduced by his hon. friends opposite to which he wished to refer. His hon. friend, the member for North Grey, had got a bill in which he sought to compel the teachers of the Roman Catholic Schools to hold the same class of certificates as those of the Public Schools. The House had no power to pass such a measure. It was one of the rights or privileges conferred by the Constitution. These people who were selected by the Roman Catholic body had a right to be appointed teachers of the schools, and to be regularly employed in that capacity.

It being now six o'clock the Speaker left the chair.

After recess Mr. Mowat resumed. He said in the bill brought down by the Minister of Education there was no provision for the ballot, because the Government believed that the Separate School supporters did not want the ballot. There were the same reasons for the ballot in Separate School elections as in Public School elections, but it was commonly suggested that the ballot was necessary for the protection of the Roman Catholics against their clergy. Having possessed themselves of all the information available on the subject, he was satisfied there was no antagonism between the clergy of the Church of Rome and the people of that Church—that between the clergy and the mass of the people of the Church of Rome there was the utmost confidence, respect and sympathy. He should deceive himself, and so would the Protestant public, if they took any other view. To impose the ballot on Separate School supporters from a Protestant standpoint could not be but extremely unwise—to impose it before they were ready would delay rather than hasten their disposition to adopt the ballot. Non-politicians might be of a different impression. Politicians, he did not believe, could have any other view than this. A good deal was said about the corporate vote, and that such was the influence of the Roman Catholic clergy that the corporate vote was subject to their opinion. If so, it would be subject to their influence notwithstanding the existence of the ballot; and if, notwithstanding the ballot, this would be the case, what they said demonstrated that they did not at all believe what they professed as to the powers of the clergy. His own idea was that it would not make a particle of difference. It was for the Roman Catholics themselves to say when the time had come for the adoption of the ballot system. It was to be remembered that they were 80 years in this country—or the people of this country were here for that time—before they were prepared to adopt the ballot for Parliamentary elections, and the ballot in municipal elections did not come for a couple of years longer. Then they had the option of the ballot in Public School elections, although not one-third of the Public School Boards or school sections had availed themselves of using it.

Mr. Meredith—It does not apply to rural sections.

Mr. Mowat said it did not matter. There

were a very large proportion that did not avail themselves of it—that was the point. That showed that Protestant School supporters were not prepared for the adoption of the ballot. Time must be given for all these things. In some cases the ballot had been adopted, and it had been regretted. His own opinion was that the ballot must be adopted for all their Public Schools, but it must be left to their option.

Mr. Meredith—What municipality regrets having adopted the ballot?

Mr. Mowat—I have heard of one in Huron.

Mr. Gibson (Huron)—I will enlighten you as to that. The only suggestion of evidence that Separate School supporters were ripe for the ballot came from his hon. friend opposite who referred to the number of Roman Catholic children attending Public Schools, and in some way or other, he did not know exactly how, had argued from that that Roman Catholics were in some way or other in favor of the ballot. Well, if there were Roman Catholics attending the Public Schools in places where there were Separate Schools, certainly those Roman Catholics who sent their children there were not in need of the protection of the ballot. If, in spite of the alleged influence of their clergy, they did this, they were not the people for whom the ballot was said to be needed. They had had no petition for the ballot for Separate Schools; no resolutions in support of the ballot for Separate Schools. There were two or three newspapers through the country supported by the Roman Catholic party, and none of them asked for the ballot. There was no evidence for it; and, so far as there was any evidence, it went to prove the contrary, so very slight was the ground upon which the hon. gentleman was urging his legislation. Now, as to Mr. Meredith's bills. In one of them—that concerning the ballot—he appeared to change the law on this subject with reference to Public Schools as well as that with respect to Separate Schools. He (Mr. Mowat) felt it would be utterly out of the question to force the ballot on Separate Schools and leave it optional as to Public Schools. So a large number of Public Schools which had not adopted the ballot would have it imposed upon them by this bill. He objected to that. It should be left to their own option, as it was now. Well, that was the effect of the bill, and that was contrary to all sound principles of legislation—at least to Liberal ideas of legislation. Then there was his other bill—the Act respecting Separate School supporters. The first section of that Act assumed that as the law now stood a person might become entitled to assessment as a Separate School supporter without having given the notice which the law required. He objected to that provision of his bill which said that "notwithstanding any provision to the contrary," etc. He said there were no provisions to the contrary. As to the second section, it was so absurd that he could hardly believe that it was from the hand of the leader of the Opposition. He proposed to make it the duty of the Clerk to make the necessary entries upon the roll. He provided no appeal, no machinery, he said in his bill that any error of the Clerk should not be conclusive, he provided no means of correcting such an error. He did not know how these were to be guarded.

Mr. Meredith—Supposing the Clerk makes a mistake now?