QUEBEC CORRESPONDENCE OF THE BRITISH WHIG.

LETTER No. II.

Quebec, Feb. 4.

DEAR WHIG,—

In my last letter I made mention of the vast amount of *private* Public Legislation, id est, Bills of Members, each having a bit of legislation to concoct. I have but an imperfect list before me, and yet of attempts to amend the Municipal Act of Upper Canada, I find the following:—

Mr. McConkey has a Bill to amend the Assessment.

Mr. Biggar—Qualification of Reeves.

Mr. Powell—To pay Taxes before Voting.

Mr. McKellar—Townships to buy Wet Lands from the Crown.

Mr. D. A. Macdonald—Respecting Statute Labor.

Mr. Biggar—Lock-up Houses in Townships.

Mr. J. S. Ross—To raise money for the Poor.

Mr. A. McKenzie—Respecting Railways in Townships.

Mr. Aikins—Respecting Money Votes.

Mr. Joly—On Standing Timber.

Mr. Ault—On Line Fences and Water Courses.

Mr. Stirton—On Canada Thistles.

Mr. T. C. Wallbridge—On planting Trees on Public Highways.

Mr. Geoffrion—A similar Bill.

Mr. Wright—On Wards in Townships.

Mr. Street—To tax Dogs and preserve Sheep.

Here are Seventeen Bills all to amend the Municipal Act, and all putting it to pieces in a variety of ways. Some of these Bills have already been read a second time and referred to separate committees, a mode of proceeding I by no means admire; for in lieu of sending them to separate committees, composed of the friends of the mover, they should all be referred to one Committee chosen by the House. Many of the Bills possess merit, and others again are trivial and worthless, and if they are to be passed or rejected severally, the legislation will be imperfect and bad; and no one Township Council will be able to find the Act when wanted. Whereas, if one Act be passed, comprising all the useful Amendments, every one then would know where to look for what he wanted. Wake the Government up, Mr. Whig.

There is no single item of news that I can send you, that has not already been flashed across the wires to every part of Canada. The House is not in Session to-day, and all the members are busy as nailers in the various Committee Rooms. If I stop to speak to any one, he answers impatiently, 'he has no time just then to tell me any thing—too busy,'—so I wander along the halls disconsolately; for, sorry to say, the rigid order not to supply any of the good things of this life within the Parliamentary Buildings is still in force. Still, there is a way of whipping the d—l round the stump, though as yet I have not found it.

There was a pretty fierce debate in the House yesterday, in which the Opposition, however feeble, showed their teeth. Mr. Macdonald wanted two things—he wanted the Debate on Confederation to continue every day, the two Government Days of the week not being sufficient to expedite the business; and he wanted the Debate to take place with the Speaker in the Chair, instead of in Committee of the Whole, where every man can prate as long and as often as pleases. Mr. Sandfield Macdonald, Mr. Dorion, and Mr. Holton were the chief Oppositionists, and part of the ground they took was, that as the Conference Resolutions contain a pledge of the construction of a Railroad to the Lower Provinces, that being a money grant, it must originate in Committee of the Whole; and they also objected to some irregularity in the introduction of the Resolutions. The discussion was then made regular by Mr. Macdonald's formally proposing that an address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that she be graciously pleased to submit to the Imperial Parliament at its next session, a measure for uniting the colonies of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island into one Government, based on the Resolutions adopted at a Conference of delegates from these colonies, held at Quebec on the 10th of October last. Then Mr. Macdonald had his own way—the opposition was withdrawn. Therefore, every afternoon until the matter is finally disposed of, Confederation will be the topic of debate. But however long the debate may last, it is a foregone conclusion, that Confederation will be carried with flying colors.

AN OBSERVER.

The Editor's Table---No. 552.

The Table of a well-conducted periodical is always well supplied with new Publications, but it is not often, that it is presented with so useful and so valuable a Work as

AN AMERICAN DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE by Noah Webster, LL. D. 4to. pp. 1840. Bound.

The above is a Quarto Copy of Dr. Webster's Pictorial Unabridged Dictionary, with 9000 New Words, and 1500 Illustrations, revised by Dr. Chauncey Goodrich, and Dr. Noah Porter, and published by Messrs. G. & C. Miriam, Springfield, Mass. John Creighton, Kingston Agent. Price $7 Canada Money.

It would be a task of supererogation for us to praise Webster's Dictionary, for altho' an American Work, and indulging in many queer spellings of well-known words, yet it has ever been pronounced a work of the highest literary merit, and is ever quoted by English Scholars. Of course, after Dr. Johnson had completed his great Lexicon, it was comparatively an easy task to compile English Dictionaries, but the English Lexicographer left so much undone, and the English language changed so much, that he had hardly died ere another Dictionary was deemed necessary. This want in the early part of the present century Dr. Webster supplied, and his example has been followed by others, both at Home and in America.—Several editions of 'Webster' have since been published, each one more copious in words and meanings than its predecessor, but the present one is the latest, and is already famous throughout this Continent, in spite of the cruel war that desolates the land. It has now found its way into Canada, and we make no doubt, but all those who can afford its cost ($7) will not regret the purchase. Its reputation in the United States, altho' very great, is not universal, the advocates in several American Dictionary, that of Dr. Worcester, taking sly opportunities to decry that of its great rival. In the Atlantic Monthly for February, now lying on 'Our Table,' in the article 'The Pleiades of Connecticut' is a slap. 'Noah Webster, who was already theft and there incitating his method of teaching the American People to *misspel*.' But a prophet, however excellent, is not always honored in his own country, and it must console those who cherish the memory of their renowned compatriot, that if in New England there may be some cavillers at his mode of spelling, yet in Old England, he is so great an authority, that with few exceptions, his emendations have been almost generally adopted. We have before us Testimonials innumerable of the excellence of this latest Edition, but were we to begin to quote, where could we leave off? So we pass the Work to the public, leaving them to find out its merits.

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE for February. L. Scott & Co., New York; John Creighton, Kingston. $3 Canada Money.

Messrs. L. Scott & Co.'s Reprints of the Four Great Reviews, (the London Quarterly, Westminster, Edinburgh and North British,) and Blackwood's Magazine, have been so long established on this Continent, and have had so wide a circulation, that there are few who are not more or less acquainted with them. Their popularity is such that even complications of extracts from their pages have met with an extensive sale. If fragments are so desirable, how much more so must be the perfect work without mutilation or abridgment. Though the great variety of subjects treated in every number gives at first the resemblance of a miscellany, yet it is soon apparent that the articles in one cannot with advantage be severed from their original connexion, for each Review has an individual character quite as marked as that of any living person, and the tone and manner of a paper in one no more harmonizes with the writing in another than do the views of the British Whig with those of the New York Tribune. Fish, flesh and fowl, separately and in due order, are palatable enough, but they should not be cooked in the same kettle, or served in the same dish. The terms of subscription for the whole five are only $10 a year, Canada Money, which is a singularly low rate, when we consider the present prices of labor and paper, and when we learn that Leonard Scott & Co. pay a copyright to the foreign publishers—an expense seldom incurred by any other publishing house in this country. Upwards of four thousand pages, equal to seven large octavo volumes, and containing papers by the best writers of the day, are here furnished at a much lower rate than is usually asked for mere quantity alone. At this time, when the cost of American books is doubled, and the prices of foreign works are so high, as almost to amount to a prohibition, it is natural to suppose that these periodicals, whose special province it is to review new books and keep their readers informed of the progress of science, literature, and art, will be consulted with more avidity than ever before, and many of those, who in former times may have bought books without hesitation, if the title presented any attraction, will be thankful to have the means at hand of testing the value of the proposed purchase before going to the expense of becoming the owner.—The copy of 'Blackwood' now before us, contains the conclusion of 'Tony Butler,' one of the very best novels of the age.

THE PHRENOLOGICAL JOURNAL for February. Fowler & Wells, New York. $1.50.

THE UPPER CANADA LAW JOURNAL for January. W. C. Chewett & Co., Toronto. $3 Cash.

THE JOURNAL OF ARTS AND MANUFACTURES for February. W. C. Chewett & Co., Toronto. 75 cents.

THE AMERICAN AGRICULTURIST for February. O. Judd, New York. $1.50.

THE CANADA FARMER for February. G. Brown, Toronto. $1.

While we admit that the 'Canada Farmer' is monthly advancing in usefulness, yet as it now enjoys nearly the whole patronage of Canada, we cannot avoid counselling the editor, however unpalatable the advice may be, to keep on his Table a copy of the 'American Agriculturist,' and strive to imitate its many excellencies.—There is patronage enough in Canada to support a first class Agricultural Newspaper.

JOURNAL DE L' INSTRUCTION PUBLIQUE, pour Janvier. E. Senecal, Montreal.—$1.00.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS, for the half year ending Jan. 30, 865. Blue Book. 8vo pp. 52.

REPORT OF THE STATE OF THE MILITIA OF CANADA, Blue Book. 8vo. pp. 150.

Neither of these Reports is so full in details as we could wish. Kingston and these Counties seem to be wholly ignored.

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY for February.—Ticknor & Fields, Boston. $3.00.

This, the best of American Magazines, the 'Blackwood' of New England, is just as good and interesting as usual, but it still indulges in its queer hifalutin English, and in the tantalizing mode of parading the writers and not placing the articles. How can those at a distance know what is current in Boston?

'STILL HARPING ON MY DAUGHTER.'—For many years the British Whig has endeavored to abate the snobbery of the Canadian Press, in plaistering such members of Parliament, who are entitled to be called 'honorable,' with the prefix, while reporting the Debates. It is very true, that in legal parlance, they should be so designated; but the custom of the Press at Home, is otherwise. The Rt. Hon. E. Gladstone, is simply termed 'Mr. Gladstone' in the one House, and the 'Rt. Hon. Earl Russell,' in the House of Lords is only called 'Earl Russell.' But in Canada, the British Whig is the only newspaper in which the Hon. George Brown and other honorable gentlemen are called 'Mr. Brown,' &c., in one House; while in the other, the Hon. Alexander Campbell, as well as all members are simply styled 'Mister.' The Globe and Leader, as they get the reports by telegraph, now usually omit the 'hon.' in those of the 'House;' but continue the practice in those of the Council. It is very snobbish to do this sort of thing. The members themselves don't care a dump about it, as we happen to know, and they would be quite satisfied if the Press would prefix the 'hon.' only when speaking of them.

ST GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL.—At a meeting held yesterday in the Vestry Room of St. George's Cathedral, the Dean in the chair the following resolution was moved by Thos. Kirkpatrick, Esq., seconded by Sir H. Smith:

Whereas, a petition to the Legislature of this Province is being circulated, and signed outside the Congregation of this Cathedral, for the alienation of the Glebe and Endowment of the Rectory of this Parish. This Vestry hereby protests against the Legislature interfering with the vested rights of the said Rector, and against the passing of any act compelling such alienation, and that the Churchwardens of the Cathedral do petition both Houses of Legislature against the passing of any Act compelling such alienation, and that the Church Wardens of the Cathedral do petition both Houses of Legislature against the passing of such a measure.

The Vestry hereby authorize the Church Wardens to take such means for the carrying out the object of this Resolution, by petition or otherwise as they may deem expedient.

MILITIA GENERAL ORDERS.—The following is among the Militia General Orders issued on Friday.

"With reference to the General Order of the 20 ult., His Excellency the Commander in-chief has been pleased to give Capt. Thomas Fitzroy Kelly, 2nd Administrative Battalion, rank and precedence over all other officers commanding companies in said battalion, test officer holding the rank of full Major in the 14th Battalion Volunteer Rifles, Kingston."

THE GREAT CATHOLIC MEETING.

A FULL REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS.

On Friday evening last, 3rd February, the largest and most influential Roman Catholic meeting ever held in this city took place. It was called by advertisement and large posters placarded over the city. It was known for several days previous that such a meeting was to be held, but until Friday it was not certain what was the object of the meeting. At eight o'clock the Very Rev. Angus McDonnell, Senior Vicar General of the Diocese, entered the room, and was received with loud cheers and every manifestation of respect; every person rising as the Venerable Ecclesiastic approached the entrance. The Very Reverend Gentleman seemed deeply affected at this manifestation of the respect and esteem of the Catholic people of Kingston for him.

Upon motion of Mr. J. O'Reilly, Q. C., the Vicar General was moved to the Chair, and Mr. Daniel Macarow, Barrister at Law, was requested to act as Secretary.

The Vicar General, upon taking the chair, said that the object of the present meeting was to consider the defects in the present Separate School Law and the best means of remedying them. It was not his intention to delay them long by enumerating their grievances, the gentlemen in whose hands the several resolutions to be proposed are placed would do that. He merely wished to state to them that the immediate reason of our meeting now was because we Catholics believe that previous to any change in the constitution, the rights and privileges of the minorities in both provinces should be secured by legislative enactment. His belief was also shared by the Protestant minority of Lower Canada, who, although already possessing greater privileges than Catholics enjoy in Upper Canada, are endeavoring to have a bill introduced which will confer upon them still greater advantages. It gave him great pleasure to find that the Protestants of Lower Canada have taken the initiative in agitating this question, (hear, hear), and he hoped they would be successful. The Catholics are by no means selfish; but what they are willing to give to others, surely they are right in demanding for themselves. (Cheers). Catholics never believed that the last Separate School Bill provided for their wants or gave them equal justice, and therefore could never accept it as a finality. (Loud cheers). He was prepared to receive any resolutions and hear any remarks that gentlemen may have to make on this important subject.

The first Resolution was moved by Mr. James O'Reilly, Q.C., seconded by Mr. Thomas Baker.

"That the existing school law in Upper Canada is inadequate to the wants and purposes of Roman Catholics, and does not secure to them in the establishment and maintenance of their schools those rights which, as members of a free community, they are justly entitled to possess."

In moving the resolution Mr. O'Reilly said he was glad to see the Very Reverend the Vicar General in the chair. He was always to be found at his post whenever his presence was required in aid of any movement having for its object the advancement of Catholic interests or the maintaining of Catholic rights and privileges. (Cheers.) He (Mr. O'Reilly) knew that the venerable Vicar General had travelled a considerable distance in order to be present at this meeting, and to give his hearty support to the present movement, which, to borrow the language of the resolution just read, had for its object the obtaining for the Roman Catholics in Upper Canada in the establishment and maintenance of their Schools, those rights which, as members of a free community, they were entitled to possess. (Cheers.) The rights for which Catholics contended were freedom of education and the liberty of applying taxes imposed upon them for educational purposes to the support of Catholic Schools. He was pleased to find so large an attendance of the ratepayers of the city present, the wealth and intelligence of the Catholics of Kingston being fully represented. It was of great importance in the present crisis of our affairs, that so large and enthusiastic a meeting should be held, for it proved conclusively the interest taken by Catholics in the cause of Separate Schools and freedom of education. It was a pleasure to him to think that questions of this character could be discussed calmly and deliberately, as it became them as freemen to do. The time was opportune, for the storms that clouded the political horizon of Canada had subsided. At the present time men's minds were not unduly prejudiced or excited as in days gone by, when treating of questions affecting Catholic rights and interests. The people's representatives in Parliament are therefore less trammelled and more inclined to listen to reason and be guided by the dictates of justice. (Hear, hear.) The law affecting the establishment of Catholic Schools has frequently engaged the attention of our Legislature within the last fifteen years. Several bills have been brought before Parliament relative to Catholic Separate Schools. Theoretically the principle has been affirmed over and over again of the rights of Catholics to freedom of education, but the law has been always so framed as to obstruct the practical working of the system. The last of these Separate School Bills became law in 1863. The title to the Act considering the advantages supposed to be secured to Roman Catholics by it is an anomaly. It is entitled "An Act to restore to Roman Catholics in Upper Canada certain rights in respect to Separate Schools." He had carefully perused the Act, but failed to discover in it the rights alleged to be restored to Roman Catholics. On the contrary, he found that this much vaunted School Act curtailed privileges heretofore enjoyed by Roman Catholics, and that the title was a sham, a delusion. (Cheers.) Previous to the passing of this Act the power existed of establishing Separate Schools in any Common School Section in Upper Canada, the limits of the Roman Catholic School Section being identical with those of the Common Schools, no matter how large or extended the Common School Section might be. By the 19th clause of the Act of 1863 Catholics residing over three miles, in a direct line, from the Catholic Separate School, although within the boundaries of the Common School Section, and supporters of the Separate Schools within that Section, were liable to be taxed for the support of Common Schools. (Hear.) And if the Separate School happened to be near the boundary of the Common School Section, the effect would be to cut off nearly one half of the supporters from the Separate School. True, the privilege is granted of uniting two Separate School Sections in adjoining municipalities; but the benefit that the framer intended by this clause to confer was destroyed by the nineteenth clause or the three mile, in a direct line, arrangement. (Hear, hear.) In Upper Canada Townships and Common School Sections as a rule, are laid out in straight lines. A radius in a circle of three miles from the School House is the extent of the privilege given by this Act for supporters of a Separate School to reside in who desired to be relieved from the payment of a Common School tax. All outside the circle, although within the boundaries of the Common School Section, are lost to the Separate School and belong to the Common School. The most favorable way it could be managed would still leave property in the angles unavailable for Separate School purposes, unless the extreme points of the angles were within a distance of three miles, in a direct line, from the School house. (Hear.) In order to embrace the whole of the property within any municipality, the limits should be defined by lines and not by parties. Permission is given to School Sections to unite, but what advantage does this afford, if the property of Catholics in the united Sections outside the radius of three miles is taxed for the support of Common Schools? (Hear.) He failed to see the rights alleged to be restored to Roman Catholic Separate Schools by this Act, and which Catholics have been asked to receive as a final Act of Separate School legislation. If they (the Catholics) were met by the assertion that they had accepted the Act of 1863 as a finality, the answer was plain—they had not—(cheers)—because it did not restore any substantial right which Catholics formerly possessed, but on the contrary, it curtailed one of their most valuable privileges—the right of extending the boundaries of their Separate School Sections to the extent of those of the Common Schools. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) But there were other objections in the existing bill, grievances which ought to be redressed. For instance, Roman Catholics having property in School Sections where they did not reside, were taxed for the support of Common Schools, although supporters of a Separate School in their own School Section. He (Mr O'Reilly) considered this a great hardship. The law should be amended; it is unfair and contrary to the true spirit of liberty, both civil and religious, to force men to contribute to the support of schools to which they are from conscientious convictions opposed, and which they believe are calculated to endanger, if not destroy, the faith of the Catholic children frequenting them. (Loud cheers.) The School Law of Lower Canada was more liberal to the Protestant minority of that section of the Province. There (in Lower Canada) Protestants can establish, in any of the Municipalities, dissentient schools, and are not confined to the School Section fixed by the majority, as is the Catholic minority of Upper Canada. There is no three mile limit there. They (the Protestants of Lower Canada) are free to define the boundaries of their school districts within the Municipality. We are not. (Hear, hear.) The property of Catholic non-residents in Upper Canada is taxed for the support of Common Schools, schools which in the great majority of cases are purely Protestant. In Lower Canada the property of non-resident Protestants is taxed solely for the support of their own schools. The injustice does not exist there as it does here. In Lower Canada the sacred demesne of conscience is not invaded; men are not coerced to act contrary to their religious convictions. (Loud cheers.) There is one great advantage which, by the Lower Canada School Law, the Protestants have, and which the Catholics of Upper Canada do not possess: it is a Normal School endowed by government for the training of their School teachers. They (the minority of Lower Canada) are not content with this, but have demanded a Separate Council of Public Instruction, a Chief Superintendent of Education of their own, in direct communication with the government; the endowment of their Colleges as Provincial Institutions; separate from any provision that may be made for Common Schools; the endowment of the Protestant University of McGill, and above all they (the minority of Lower Canada) stoutly contend for the principle that no Protestant should be taxed for the support of Catholic Schools (cheers). Therefore, why should not the Catholic minority of Upper Canada have the courage of our Protestant fellow subjects of Lower Canada, and demand that the educational institutions of the minorities of both Upper and Lower Canada be placed upon an equal footing. (Enthusiastic cheering.) The principle is a just one. It is fair. We ask no more and we will not be satisfied with less. (Continued cheering.) The dread felt by our friends of the minority in Lower Canada is, that when the Confederation of the Provinces takes place they will be swamped by the Catholic majority and therefore desire to be protected by Constitutional enactment. They may be right, and if they are, why should not our rights and privileges be also protected by Constitutional enactment? (Hear, hear, and cries of yes.) If the concessions sought by our Protestant friends are granted, upon every principle of justice like concessions should be made to us. (Cheers.) We may be told that the Common School systems of both Sections of the Province are not the same; that in the Schools of Lower Canada, Secular and Religious instructions are united, in Upper Canada the principle of non-Sectarianism is carried out, and therefore the Roman Catholics might safely send their children to the Common Schools. Here exactly lies the whole difficulty. The Roman Catholic conscientiously believes that secular and religious instruction should be united and that secular education without religious training is dangerous to faith and morals. The Common Schools of Upper Canada are called non-Sectarian, but they are in fact in every essential Protestant Schools. The teachers (generally) are Protestant, the books are Protestant, the ideas engrafted on the mind of youth are Protestant, at any rate they are ideas calculated to bias the mind of the Catholic child and lessen its respect for the religion of its parents. Who then is the proper judge of what is best for the child of the Catholic parent? The parent, the child's natural protector, or the Protestant Legislator, whose ideas of education are altogether secular? The difficulty is at once solved by the application of the principles of Civil and Religious liberty, the birthright of every British subject, that the rights of the parent over the child must prevail. (Loud Cheers.) In England education is left free, the rights of the poorest are respected, and education flourishes. In the neighboring State of New York the law is compulsory, the rights of the parent over the child are invaded, State Schoolism prevails, the consequence is that over 300,000 children of school age in that State attend no school, and are left to be brought up in ignorance. (Hear, hear.) It has been charged against the Catholic Clergy that they are opposed to the education of the masses, their interest being to keep people in ignorance. He (Mr. O'Reilly's) experience had taught him to believe the contrary, that the Catholic Clergy have ever been in the vanguard of popular education. And in Canada to-day the bishops and Priests are making extraordinary exertions to secure for the Catholics of this country, not only the rudiments of an ordinary English education, but to establishing Classical Schools and Colleges where the highest branches of learning may be imparted to the youth of the country. The people have seconded and will continue to second them in their noble efforts. (Hear and cheers.) In Lower Canada our Protestant friends have McGill University, for which they ask a permanent endowment from the State. In Upper Canada the Catholics have no University. But, in view of the Confederation of the Provinces, and that the minorities of both Upper and Lower Canada may be placed upon an equal footing, we, the minority of Upper Canada, should also have a University, also endowed by the State. All the Catholics of Upper Canada ask is, that the same rights, the same privileges, secured by the Constitution, should be enjoyed by both minorities. We want no favors, and we would be ashamed of the name of men if we would accept of less than what we conceived to be our rights, we would protest against a wrong as flagrant. (Loud and prolonged cheering), and which the learned gentleman resumed his seat.

Mr. Thomas Baker in seconding the resolution said he was never satisfied with the Separate School Law. Those who generally introduced the different measures affecting the educational of the Catholic youth of Upper Canada, blundered well enough, but in Committee the Bills were so mutilated as to destroy any advantages which were intended to be bestowed here. The Bill as introduced by Mr. Richard Scott was a good one, but it was hacked on in Committee, the objectionable 19th Clause, which ruined the measure. The injustice of taxing non-resident Catholics in common school sections for the support of Common Schools was an injustice which he hoped to see rectified.—Without these two amendments our Separate School Law was of little value to us. (Cheers.)

The second resolution was moved by Mr James Harty, and seconded by Mr Macarow.

"That in view of the Confederation of the British American provinces, it is the declared intention of the Government to protect the rights and privileges of the minorities in Upper and Lower Canada, in the maintenance and endowment of Denominational schools by legislative enactment. It is therefore the opinion of this meeting that the Catholic minority of Upper Canada should secure for their children freedom of education, and that they should, like their fellow subjects, the protestants in Lower Canada, seek to obtain the sanction of the authorities to such a school law as will secure them civil and religious privileges and place the Educational institutions of both minorities upon an equal footing."

Mr. James Harty, in moving the second resolution, said that it gave him great pleasure to move this resolution, because it enunciated a doctrine to which he heartily subscribed, and which he was prepared to go any constitutional length to maintain. It was the doctrine of civil and religious liberty. (Cheers). The practical application of that principle was, the right of Catholics to have their own schools free and untrammelled by the state. All they ask of themselves they were prepared fully and freely to accord to others.—(Cheers).

Mr. Macarow said, it gave him much pleasure to second this resolution, every sentiment of which he fully endorsed. The Catholics of Upper Canada wanted nothing but what they were prepared to grant to the Protestants of Lower Canada. Freedom of education was dear to every lover of civil and religious liberty, and this freedom of education should be guaranteed to the Catholic minority of Upper Canada, in the new constitution about to be formed. (Hear, hear). The establishment of a Roman Catholic University in Upper Canada, properly endowed, he considered of the very first importance—a University where Catholic young men, who had duly gone the necessary training and examination, might receive degrees. The Protestants of Lower Canada possessed this advantage, and he saw no reason why a similar privilege should not be granted to the Roman Catholics of the Upper Province. He had seen with pleasure the action taken by the Protestants of Lower Canada in this matter. He cordially approved of that action, and hoped the Roman Catholics of Upper Canada would imitate their good example. The present Separate School Law was defective in many important particulars, as had been pointed out by the learned gentleman who had first addressed them, and ought to be amended. While he admitted that the Common Schools system of education was a very admirable system in itself, it wanted that great element which he and every Roman Catholic considered of the greatest importance—the element of religious instruction. (Cheers). The Catholics of Upper Canada also wanted a Chief Superintendent of Education, communicating directly with the Government. It was necessary for the proper and effectual working of the School Law. A Normal School for the proper training of competent teachers was also required. To train the teacher, to make him competent for the onerous and responsible duties of his station was of paramount importance. (Applause). He felt assured that every liberal Protestant of the city would respect & endorse the action taken by this meeting. They had met to discuss this great educational question in a fair and impartial spirit, to lay what they considered their grievances in a fair and constitutional manner before the representatives of the country, and to ask from them a sufficient guarantee for their educational rights. It was a duty they owed to themselves and to their children to maintain and perpetuate freedom of education. (Loud cheers).

The third Resolution was moved by Mr. Patrick Brown, seconded by Councillman Brophy.

"That the property of Roman Catholics should not be taxed for the support of schools to which they do not feel, from conscientious convictions, at liberty to send their children, and therefore the Catholic holders of property in the different municipalities in Upper Canada should pay their taxes to such separate school or schools as they may designate, whether residents of the municipality or not, and that the taxes payable by incorporated companies or public bodies composed of Catholic and Protestant shareholders should be divided in the same proportion as the Government grant to schools."

Mr. Browne said he moved the resolution with pleasure, for he always felt that it was a grievance that the Catholic ratepayers of Upper Canada should not be permitted to segregate their schools to which their taxes were to be paid; but in the majority of instances, in Upper Canada, those taxes went to the support of schools to which they were conscientiously opposed. (Hear, hear.) He was glad that the present movement commenced so auspiciously, and he, for one, would never be satisfied until the object of the present meeting was accomplished. (Cheers.)

The fourth Resolution was moved by Dr. Sullivan, seconded by Mr Wm. Harty.

"That the meeting are of opinion that a Normal School should be established and endowed by the Government, distinct from the present Normal School at Toronto, for the training and instruction of Roman Catholic school teachers; and that fully to secure the efficient working of the Separate Schools a Catholic Council of Public Instruction should be established, and a Catholic Superintendent of Education be appointed, to be in direct communication with the Government."

Dr. Sullivan said that the pleasing duty of moving one of the resolutions had been entrusted to him. The importance of this meeting far exceeds that of any other which he had ever attended, and from which, if successful in attaining the end it has in view, would confer immense benefit on the Catholics of Upper Canada. [Hear.] The gentlemen who had moved the first resolution in an able manner, had given you a clear idea of our wants and disabilities under the present law, and pourtrayed the grievances which we labour under and desire to have redressed. For one of these grievances the resolution which he had the honor to move points out a remedy. Of the necessity of Normal Schools there can be no doubt. To educate the people well, they must be supplied with duly qualified teachers, men who have been properly trained for the high and responsible duties they are called on to fulfil. The teacher of a Primary School, especially, requires the possession of no ordinary acquirements; it is to his care the mind in its expanded, undeveloped state is entrusted; to him belongs the duty of moulding it whilst in its most plastic condition, and it ever after retains the impressions then made upon it. The countries which have made the greatest advances and have been the most successful in educating the people, are those that were the first to make extensive provision for Normal Schools.—[Hear, hear.] If we had at our disposal a sufficient number of these estimable and disinterested men, the Christian Brothers, we should have no necessity for such an institution. [Hear, hear.] But their their numbers are not at all equal to the demand upon them. Their services are so much sought after that they can furnish but a relatively small number of the corps of teachers required by the Separate Schools of Upper Canada. There are two Normal Schools in Lower Canada, the Protestants having one specially under their direction. It is but asking too much that the same privilege be conceded to us. [Hear, hear, and cheers.] The resolution demands that provision be made for a Board of Public Instruction, having power to fix the qualification required of teachers, select text books and regulate the system of teaching. The Board, it is to be presumed, would be composed of men possessing the confidence of their co-religionists by reason of their integrity and ability. It also asks the appointment of a Catholic Superintendent of Education. It is to be regretted, that hitherto so much indifference has been exhibited by us, more particularly in the country districts, to our educational interests, which are of such vital importance, and which ought to concern us more than any other question. [Hear.] In this matter Catholics might take example from their Protestant fellow citizens. Some time since they, with the most praiseworthy zeal, endeavoured to connect as closely as possible their Schools, and thus render their action more harmonious and efficient. They have first the Common Schools, which appear to be in a most admirable condition; then the Grammar School, where the higher branches of an English education and the languages are taught; and lastly, the Queen's University, combining an examining and teaching body, where the highest branches in literature and science are imparted, and where degrees are conferred on those who have complied with the required examinations. Notwithstanding the disabilities under which Catholics labor, they might also link together our educational establishments and make them dependent one on the other. We have the Brothers' School, which certainly is at present not inferior to any Common School in the city, and Regiopolis College, which combines the advantages of a Grammar School and College, and if it were only clothed with University powers, and some additions made to its curriculum, would place us in possession of advantages not surpassed by those of any denomination in the country.—(Cheers.) It is not too much to indulge the hope that this, the oldest Catholic College in Upper Canada, would receive the endowment, and thus afford the Catholic Youth of the Province all the advantages of a University education. But you may ask, are not the Universities, Grammar Schools and other Educational Institutions of Upper Canada open to us—what need have we to go to so much trouble and expense? It is true their advantages are accessible to the Catholics, but they have no voice in their management—nothing to say in their government, and are quite unprepared for any storm of intolerance which might pass over the country. [Hear, hear, and cheers.] Admitting that such could not occur, there are other reasons why we should have our own institutions. Although many of us from our limited observations, and judging from a few cases that may have come to our knowledge, may consider that we ought to take advantage of these institutions, we must recollect that our clergymen, who by their learning and virtue have been elevated to a position above the ordinary level of human interest and passion, men of wisdom and experience, who have no other object than the welfare of the people they are divinely nominated to instruct and guide, and who, from their high position, can closely observe the effects of such training, these men have unanimously declared that such teaching is attended with evil results. It is to be hoped that this movement may become general, and in the firm conviction of the justice of our cause, and the consciousness of the danger which threatens, endeavor by an united and well sustained effort, which no difficulties can deter, to secure, at this crisis in our history, the social rights and privileges which are likely to be bestowed on the Protestant minority of Lower Canada. At all events, Catholics shall have the satisfaction, if they do fail, that it was not for any lack of energy on their part. (Loud cheers).

Mr. William Harty, in seconding the resolution, said that whatever privileges were conferred on the Protestant minority of Lower Canada, in the education of their children, should, as a matter of fair play, be conceded to us. The Protestants of Lower Canada demanded that their property should be free from any assessment for the support of the schools of the Roman Catholic majority in that section of the Province. If that right is conceded to them, by legislative enactment, the property of the Catholic minority in Upper Canada should be similarly protected. If it were otherwise, he should feel that in this country, where all were supposed to be alike, there was, in fact, one law for the Protestants and another for the Catholics—a species of favoritism which he at all events would never be found to advocate.—(Cheers.)

The fifth resolution was moved by Mr. Denis Kane, seconded by Mr Thomas McKeever,

"That the 19th section of the Separate School Act of Upper Canada, 26 Victoria, chapter 8, should be repealed, and the law amended so as to confer upon the Roman Catholic Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada, the powers of defining the boundaries of Separate School Section that are now possessed by township municipalities for defining and establishing the boundaries of Common School Sections in Upper Canada."

Mr. Denis Kane said he always advocated the right of Roman Catholics to define the boundaries of their school sections. The 19th clause of the Act of 1863 worked prejudiciously to Catholic interests. There are several Catholic families in the neighboring Township of Pittsburgh who are desirous to support our schools, and send their children to be educated here, but as they reside a little over three miles from our schools, they are taxed for the support of the Common Schools. Although their religious convictions were opposed to the system taught in the Common Schools, nevertheless they must submit, or pay double tax, which they were unable to do. It is a cruel injustice for Catholics to be hampered as we are by this unjust clause in the School Act, and which ought to be repealed. He hoped the present agitation would not cease until the grievances Catholics labored under were redressed.—(Hear, hear, and cheers).

The Sixth Resolution was moved by Mr. Daniel Rourke, seconded by Mr. Patrick Harty.

"That the Catholic Colleges of Upper Canada should be adequately endowed as Provincial institutions, separate from any provision that may be made for Common Schools; and that a Catholic University should be established and endowed in this section of the Province, with the like privileges, powers and advantages as the University of McGill in Lower Canada."

Mr Daniel Rourke said he was born and educated in Kingston, and for years was a student of Regiopolis. Any law that would increase the influence of that noble institution would receive his hearty support. He should feel proud the day that University powers were conferred on Regiopolis, and that the Catholic youth of Upper Canada were not required to leave their own section of the Province to secure those honors and degrees to which they aspired, and which their application and talents entitled them to receive. If the Protestant University of McGill, in Lower Canada, received a permanent endowment, to avoid favoritism there should be a like institution in Upper Canada for Roman Catholics, with a like endowment. (Hearty cheers).

The seventh resolution was moved by Mr. James Campbell, seconded by Mr. James Doyle, "That a committee composed of the following gentlemen, namely, James O'Reilly, Daniel Macarow, James Harty and Dr. Sullivan be appointed to draft a memorial to His Excellency the Governor General and both branches of the Legislature, founded on the foregoing Resolutions, and that prompt measures be taken to procure signatures to said memorial."

The Committee absented themselves for a short time, returned and read the Memorial prepared, which is as follows:—

To the Honorable the Legislative Assembly of Canada in Provincial Parliament Assembled.

THE PETITION OF THE ROMAN CATHOLICS OF THE CITY OF KINGSTON.

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH—

That the existing Separate School Law in Upper Canada is inadequate to the wants and purposes of Roman Catholics, and requires amendment.

That your petitioners and dessirous of having the law so amended as to secure to the Catholics of this Province the same efficient schools and without any expense to them as the Protestant Separate Schools in Lower Canada, which the Protestants have enjoyed under their direction. It is not asking too much that the same privilege be conceded to us. [Hear, hear, and cheers.] The resolution demands that provision be made for a Board of Public Instruction, having power to fix the qualification required of teachers, select text books and regulate the system of teaching. The Board, it is to be presumed, would be composed of men possessing the confidence of their co-religionists by reason of their integrity and ability. It also asks the appointment of a Catholic Superintendent of Education. It is to be regretted, that hitherto so much indifference has been exhibited by us, more particularly in the country districts, to our educational interests, which are of such vital importance, and which ought to concern us more than any other question. [Hear.] In this matter Catholics might take example from their Protestant fellow citizens. Some time since they, with the most praiseworthy zeal, endeavoured to connect as closely as possible their Schools, and thus render their action more harmonious and efficient. They have first the Common Schools, which appear to be in a most admirable condition; then the Grammar School, where the higher branches of an English education and the languages are taught; and lastly, the Queen's University, combining an examining and teaching body, where the highest branches in literature and science are imparted, and where degrees are conferred on those who have complied with the required examinations. Notwithstanding the disabilities under which Catholics labor, they might also link together our educational establishments and make them dependent one on the other. We have the Brothers' School, which certainly is at present not inferior to any Common School in the city, and Regiopolis College, which combines the advantages of a Grammar School and College, and if it were only clothed with University powers, and some additions made to its curriculum, would place us in possession of advantages not surpassed by those of any denomination in the country.—(Cheers.) It is not too much to indulge the hope that this, the oldest Catholic College in Upper Canada, would receive the endowment, and thus afford the Catholic Youth of the Province all the advantages of a University education. But you may ask, are not the Universities, Grammar Schools and other Educational Institutions of Upper Canada open to us—what need have we to go to so much trouble and expense? It is true their advantages are accessible to the Catholics, but they have no voice in their management—nothing to say in their government, and are quite unprepared for any storm of intolerance which might pass over the country. [Hear, hear, and cheers.] Admitting that such could not occur, there are other reasons why we should have our own institutions. Although many of us from our limited observations, and judging from a few cases that may have come to our knowledge, may consider that we ought to take advantage of these institutions, we must recollect that our clergymen, who by their learning and virtue have been elevated to a position above the ordinary level of human interest and passion, men of wisdom and experience, who have no other object than the welfare of the people they are divinely nominated to instruct and guide, and who, from their high position, can closely observe the effects of such training, these men have unanimously declared that such teaching is attended with evil results. It is to be hoped that this movement may become general, and in the firm conviction of the justice of our cause, and the consciousness of the danger which threatens, endeavor by an united and well sustained effort, which no difficulties can deter, to secure, at this crisis in our history, the social rights and privileges which are likely to be bestowed on the Protestant minority of Lower Canada. At all events, Catholics shall have the satisfaction, if they do fail, that it was not for any lack of energy on their part. (Loud cheers).

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