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For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD VII.

From A. D. 1838 to A. D. 1850.

LETTER LXII.

PROCEEDINGS IN THE LEGISLATURE.—PROPOSED UNIVERSITY BOARD.—RESOLUTIONS AGAINST DENOMINATIONAL COLLEGES.—DR CRAWLEY'S LETTERS.—IMPORTANT MEETING AT YARMOUTH.—THE NINE DAY'S DEBATE IN 1849.—EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT.

My Young Friend,

The proceedings of the Legislature on the subject of education were of a very exciting character. Two opinions or modes of policy divided the legislative body. Some desired the erection of Dalhousie College upon the ruins of all others, on the specious plea that one such institution, bearing the name and wielding the powers of a provincial university, ought to be considered sufficient for Nova Scotia. The fact, however, that Dalhousie was wholly a sectarian thing, being in the hands of Presbyterians, was studiously kept out of sight; while, with strange inconsistency, the advocates of this policy proposed to abolish all grants to denominational colleges. On the other side were the friends of those colleges, maintaining that as Dalhousie, itself sectarian, could not possibly be a provincial institution; and as, for various reasons, the denominations preferred to act separately in this matter, it was but just and fair that they should share in any legislative aid that might be granted.

Yet the friends of denominational colleges were not at that time disposed to object to the establishment of an united Board for the examination of students of all colleges applying for degrees: such Board to consist of the professors of those colleges, and other gentlemen duly qualified. A bill to that effect was introduced by the Attorney Gen. (Hon. J. W. Johnston), in the session of 1842. This would have established a system analogous to that which has now been in operation in England for many years, in connection with the London University. Colleges and other institutions of learning, in different parts of the country, are affiliated to the University, and their students attend at prescribed times for examination before a Board annually appointed by the University Senate for that purpose. Their education is carried on in the institutions to which they belong: such course of study being adopted, and such books used, as will prepare them for the examination. Had the Attorney General's bill passed, the colleges in Nova Scotia, which availed themselves of the new arrangement, would have relinquished the right of conferring degrees, or rather discontinued their action in that matter, during their connection with the University Board. But the bill was not persevered in, probably because of an indisposition to make the requisite concessions.

I have informed you of the dispute between Mr. Howe and the denomination on the Christian Messenger question, and of the Special Association held at Nictaux, Jan. 18, 1843. It is a little singular that, in less than five weeks after that meeting, resolutions were introduced into the House of Assembly by Mr. Amand (it was not supposed that he was the originator,) avowedly for the purpose of destroying all denominational institutions, as far as that object would be effected by withholding legislative grants in aid. The resolutions were twelve in number. The first two and the last two contain the gist of the whole. They were as follows:—

Resolved.—"That the policy, heretofore pursued, of chartering and endowing Collegiate Institutions, of a sectarian or denominational character, is unsound, and ought to be abandoned."

2. "That this policy has already led to the erection of four colleges, each of them drawing largely upon the public resource, and neither of them efficient."

11. "That one good College, free from sectarian control and open to all denominations, maintained by a common fund, and rallying around it the affections of the whole people, would be adequate to the require-

ments of a population of 300,000 and sufficiently burthensome to the revenue.

12. "That such an institution would elevate the provincial character, remove existing difficulties, provide our youth with the blessings of a collegiate education, and attract students to the classes from the surrounding Colonies."

The debates on these resolutions occupied three days, and elicited, on the one hand, fierce opposition to Acadia College, displayed in the use of very intemperate and insulting language, and on the other, a manly defence, together with a clear exposition of the rights and claims of this denomination. The resolutions were passed by a majority of seven, and a committee was appointed to prepare a bill, but nothing more was done.

A bill to withdraw the annual grant of £400 stg. to King's College, was introduced by Mr. McClellan, and occasioned additional outbursts of feeling. It was evident that this, too, was a sidethrust at Acadia, for if King's College lost the grant, Acadia's turn would come next. After an animated and somewhat violent discussion, an amendment was proposed to defer the bill for 3 months. This was met by Mr. Howe with a motion for adjournment, which was carried by a majority of one, and quashed the whole business for that time.

An incidental benefit accrued in consequence of these debates. Dr. Crawley wrote a series of letters, entitled: "The people's interest—Thoughts on Colleges;" which were published in the *Christian Messenger*. The whole subject of collegiate education was discussed in them in a very masterly manner, and the Baptists were confirmed in their attachment to their own institutions. The superior advantages of denominational action were satisfactorily demonstrated. The letters were seven in number. In the seventh the writer observed:—"I have now demonstrated, as I conceive, the following points:—

"1. The superior healthiness of a rural situation, and its greater conduciveness to thought and genius.

"2. Its far greater adaptation to moral discipline.

"3. The much greater cheapness of education on this system.

"4. Its direct, necessary, and powerful influence in improving Common and other Schools.

"5. The increased interest that would thus be roused in favor of education, and the consequent much greater diffusion of knowledge through the whole population, than by the system of one college in Halifax.

"6. The conduciveness of this plan to the interests of Christianity.

"7. That no permanency could be secured to an institution created wholly by the Legislature, and thus exposed to the constant agitation of political influence.

"8. The extreme danger to religion on the plan projected by Mr. Howe, of one college in Halifax, without any religious character, which must necessarily be greatly exposed to the danger of falling under the influence of infidelity, or of becoming altogether Roman Catholic, by the preponderance of that body in Halifax, or the withdrawal of the Protestant community in disgust."

The subject was thoroughly reconsidered at the annual meeting of the Education Society, held at Yarmouth, in June, 1843. The Hon. J. W. Johnston pleaded the cause of Acadia College most forcibly and eloquently. The following resolutions, among others, were passed. Their re-publication may be expeditious and seasonable at the present time:—

Resolved, That the measure introduced in the last Session for abolishing all the chartered Institutions of learning in the Province, and erecting one University on their ruins, is, in the opinion of this meeting, injurious to the advancement of Education throughout the Province, and therefore opposed to the best interests of the country.

"That it is evident to this meeting—whatever efforts may be used to conceal the fact—that Halifax is the only situation intended for the proposed Provincial University; and that its establishment and support would entail on the Province a pecuniary burden largely exceeding what has been represented as the probable amount of its expense—that the benefits of a University so situated would be confined chiefly to the inhabitants of Hal-

ifax and those comparatively few persons who would resort thither for instruction, and thus the proposed scheme, if carried into effect, would most injuriously exclude the youth of the farming population and country generally from the opportunity of an enlarged and liberal education.

"Resolved, That the support of denominational institutions on the principles at present recognized and in practice, is essentially important from the condition of this Province as regards the religious bodies into which its population is divided; and that the establishment of One College in Halifax on the destruction of all others in the Province, it may be seriously apprehended,—besides the injurious influence upon the morals and habits of the youth of the country by a residence in the Metropolis—a danger deemed by this Society of no small moment—would either threaten the increase of irreligion among the youth of the country, by discovering religious instruction and feeling from education, or by the operation of some preponderating denominational influences endanger religious freedom and interests, valued above all other blessings by large portions of the people.

"Resolved—That in the opinion of this meeting, the proposed scheme for the establishment of one Metropolitan College and the destruction of the existing Institutions, is in any view of the subject premature and unsuited to the circumstances of the country. That establishments for higher Education, founded by religious denominations, and located in situations the most favorable in each case, and conducted in a manner conformable with the habits, religious feelings, and circumstances of the people by whom they are chiefly maintained, will draw forth an interest and pecuniary support—will elevate the sentiments of the people in favor of liberal education;—and will attract within their walls the youth of the country, and be the instruments of extending the blessings of liberal instruction, in union with sound moral and religious principles, to an extent incalculably greater than can be done by one College supported by the Provincial Funds, and challenging the particular interest, superintendence, and support of no class of the people especially. That such institutions, although less extensively endowed, will be enabled to carry their students through as large a course of classical and literary study as will be generally required in a country whose youth can seldom devote more than 3 or 4 years to Collegiate pursuits until required to engage in the business of life.

"That therefore as the accomplishment of the proposed metropolitan scheme would, in the opinion of this meeting, be attended with great and lasting mischief to the best interests of the country, without any adequate countervailing benefit, it demands the strenuous opposition of all persons who desire the general diffusion of enlarged education, and the elevation of the body of the people in knowledge and information, united with moral and religious principles, and in a particular manner the Baptist communities throughout the province, are solemnly called upon to resist the efforts making to render their past sacrifices and exertions towards the elevation of themselves and their country fruitless, to blast their cherished hopes, and to endanger the best interests of the province.

"Resolved—That this Assembly, encouraged by the success which has hitherto attended their exertions so far above what could have been anticipated, and in view of the high and sacred objects before them, being nothing less than the moral and religious education of the youth of this rapidly advancing Colony, feel it to be their duty and their privilege renewedly to commend their cause to God for the continuance of his blessing upon their labors, and to pledge themselves and invite every member of the Baptist denomination to a steady and vigorous perseverance in the discharge of their solemn trust."

The Education Society had received from the public funds £300 per annum for several years, and an additional grant of £200 in the year 1841. In 1842 the sum of £444 per annum was granted for three years. In 1845 the grant was reduced to £250.

The subject of aid to denominational institutions was again discussed in the Legislature in 1849, with much earnestness and some

acrimony. A bill for the withdrawal of the grant of £400 stg. per annum to King's College was carried in the Assembly, but not in the Legislative Council. Resolutions were then proposed for the discontinuance of all grants to denominational Colleges, and after a debate of nine days, they were carried by a majority of twenty-nine to seventeen. But no practical result followed, for the question being considered as an open one, in which members of the government were free to vote on either side, the administration itself was divided. Mr. Howe himself (then Provincial Secretary) declared his opposition to the destructive measure advocated by some with whom he usually acted. The following is an extract from the report of the eighth day's debate:—

"Mr. Fulton was ready to give the vote in favor for a grant for a number of years to these Colleges which were well sustained by the people, and were growing stronger every year. He denied that these institutions were exclusive—they admitted all denominations—and at Sackville the institution was purely of a similar character, and was so extensively patronised and well liked that the son of the Governor of Prince Edward Island was sent there. Before he sat down he would mention that some portions of the press of this city had thought proper to apply scurrilous language very liberally to the ministers in connection with Sackville Academy. If they supposed either to put down the Methodist denomination, or their favorite institution, they were mistaken. The legislature had called these institutions into existence, and he said they ought not to abandon them now. The youth of the country were well educated in them. He felt that the country would sustain the House in the course he recommended.

"Hon. Provincial Secretary said, one feature of the debate was to sweep away all existing institutions and create nothing. That could not be done.

"Hon. G. R. Young.—Yes it can.

"Hon. Provincial Secretary continued—You cannot sweep them away. You may withdraw your public money—but there will be more socks and mittens knit on the hills of Wilmot—more tubs of butter made—more fat calves killed—and more missionary travellers sent through the country—and Acadia College will stand on the hill side in spite of the withdrawal of our grant, and no free College be opened.

"Hon. Mr. Huntingdon.—Well, what of it?

"Hon. Provincial Secretary.—Why, I should like a system in which we can all participate, and which will oppress no one with a sense of injustice * * * * But it was said that these colleges were to train young men to the ministry. And why not? Why should we train up lawyers and doctors, and not ministers of religion, instead of importing them? The manufacture of ministers of the gospel was not so bad a manufacture after all. Would any practical mischief arise from having the boys of the country—some of them at least—trained up to the ministry? He hailed the arrival of talent among us from abroad; but every country had its own people who were fit for the different walks of life: and for the practical purposes of life, he would rather have a Nova Scotian for a minister, who was acquainted with the wants and the people of this country, than the most eminent divine living. The House could not destroy these institutions. They might withdraw their grants—create an impression that they tried unfairly to destroy them—and thus rouse up a stream of opposition throughout the country.

"Hon. Attorney General argued that a new country must be content to have its work somewhat roughly and cheaply done; so we must have our collegiate work somewhat roughly and cheaply done, and for this reason we should support the institutions we have. He went into an elaborate argument to show that the colleges of England would not answer this country, if planted down in our midst. He was against this great college. It would be wise to keep those we had; and if a man could get good wine at our corners, he would be a great fool to go a longer distance off to get worse.

"Hon. Provincial Secretary said the learn-