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By James McLaughlan.

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

FROM MR. TAYLOR'S REPORTS.

Monday, 26th March, 1855.

When the bill to incorporate the Bend of Peticoiac came up for a third reading, Mr. Gray asked the mover if he intended to pass it with the section in it which authorised women to vote. (Mr. Steadman, yes.) He (Mr. Gray) thought it very objectionable on that account, and would oppose it, for he did not like to see petticoats coming up to vote, and considered that women should not be allowed to vote under any circumstances.

Mr. Steadman said, that when the public meetings were held at the Bend, for the purpose of considering the question, it was agreed upon that all persons who paid rates should vote.

Mr. Cuder was surprised that the objections, should come from an honourable member, who had always advocated property qualification.

Mr. Boyd thought that the section in question had better be struck out. Bill to stand over until to-morrow.

House in Committee of the whole in a bill relating to Petit Jurors.

Honorable Attorney General observed that the bill was the same as recommended by the Law Commissioners. He considered it a great improvement on the present system; as in all civil cases there would be but seven Jurors, and five agreeing could render a verdict; and in criminal cases, there would still be twelve. He had frequently heard Sheriffs complain that they could not get without much difficulty, in many instances, men willing to serve as Jurors, because they were not remunerated for their services. The present bill provides that they in all civil suits receive five shillings a day, and that a Judge at the expiration of six hours, may discharge a Jury if they have not agreed; and it does away with that barbarous practice of keeping them confined without meat or drink.

Mr. Gray had no objections to that part of the bill, in all civil suits to have only seven Jurors, and that five can render a verdict, but did not think that the Judge should have discretionary power to discharge a Jury until after the expiration of six hours, and an other objection he had was, that the Sheriff could not summon the same persons but once in three years, unless the panel was exhausted, the other parts he would not object to.

Honble Mr. Ritchie did not think that any bad effects had been experienced in St. John, under the present law, and would like to have a clause inserted in the present bill to have that County exempt from its operation.

Mr. Connell thought that something was necessary to improve the present system; but as to paying Jurors, if the present bill went to pay those of the Session he would oppose it, as he considered those Courts ought to be abolished altogether, as they were the means of collecting a great number of persons together for no good purpose whatever; and hoped that some measure would be introduced during the present Session to have them done away with. That part which entailed the powers of the Sheriffs he approved of in the selection of Jurors; and also would be willing to pay those Jurors who attended the Supreme Court.—Progress reported.

Another long debate on the New Brunswick Iron Mining Bill. Mr. Connell again fully explained the objects of the measure. (There seemed to be a strong desire on the part of Members generally to render every facility to Mr. Stevens to forward his designs, but the Mining question was in such a position that the Committee scarce-

ly knew what course to pursue, but it was thought best by a majority to report progress until after the measure now before the Council was known.)

Mr. Gray moved that the House go into Committee of the Whole on the Report of King's College. The Hon. Member, being one of the Commission, went fully into the subject, and gave an account of what the Commission had done, and stated that the thanks of the country were due to Dr. Ryerson, of Canada, for the able assistance rendered by him; and considered that he was probably one of the best educationists the world at the present day could produce; and also spoke very highly of Mr. Dawson of Nova Scotia, and Dr. Wayland of the United States, for their valuable assistance. At the conclusion of the Hon. Member's speech, he read and moved his Resolution, which is as follows:—

Resolved,—That the Commission approves of the principles set forth in the Report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the state of King's College, communicated to the House by message of His Excellency on the ninth day of February last, and recommends the House to aid in maturing such measures as may be necessary for effectually remodelling the Educational institutions of the Province.

Mr. Connell said he had listened with great pleasure to the speech of the Hon. and learned member for St. John, who had opened the debate. The hon. member had shown that his heart was in the cause he had espoused; and although he differed with him in some of his views, he could not but feel pleased with the manner in which he had put the case before the House. There was one thing, however, that the hon. member had entirely omitted—he would ask him what he proposed doing if his Resolution was sustained.

Mr. Gray considered his duty, as one of the Commissioners of King's College, was completed when the Report was placed in the hands of His Excellency the Lieut. Governor. He thought the matter was one claiming the attention of the Government, and that it ought to be taken up by them; but if they would not do it, he was willing to bring in the Bill, and do his best towards carrying it through.

Mr. Connell here read several extracts from the College Report, and continued by saying that he did not like the third clause of the fifth Section of the Bill, which would give the Senate of the University the sole control and management of the Parish Schools. Whenever a Bill was brought in, having reference to King's College, he hoped to see the first Section providing for the abolition of King's College, by the repeal of the Charter. The College, as it now exists and with the character it has earned, should have no connection with the Educational System of the Province. He would refrain from making any remarks in reference to the Professors, but if they wished to sustain a Collegiate establishment in the Province, it was absolutely necessary to place it under the management of entirely new men. There was so much dissatisfaction throughout the country in reference to the present establishment and the Professors, that it was past remedy. Whatever they might do—all the legislation in the world would be thrown away—it could, in his opinion, never be made useful to the country. He wished to see a Free School system adopted, so that every child in the Province might receive a good education; and let the children of the poor be educated at the public expense. He knew the measure to be important, for he felt the inconvenience himself through want of an opportunity to obtain such an education as he would have desired. He had received from Dr. Ryerson some works concerning the system of Education in Canada. From one of those works he would read some extracts of a speech made on the subject of

Education by that great American statesman, the late Daniel Webster:—

"In this particular New England may be allowed to claim. I think, a merit of peculiar character. She early adopted and has constantly maintained the principle, that it is the undoubted right and bounden duty of Government to provide for the instruction of all youth. That which is elsewhere left to chance or to charity, we secure by Law. For the purpose of public instruction, we hold every man subject to taxation in proportion to his property; and we look not to the question whether he himself have or have not children to be benefited by the education for which he pays. We regard it as a wise and liberal system of policy, by which property and the peace of society are secured. We seek to prevent, in some measure, the extension of the penal code, by inspiring a salutary and conservative principle of virtue and knowledge in an early age. We hope to excite a feeling of respectability and a sense of character, by enlarging the capacity and increasing the sphere of intellectual enjoyment. By general instruction we seek as far as possible to purify the whole moral atmosphere, to keep good sentiments uppermost, and to turn the strong current of feeling and opinion, as well as the censures of the law, and the denunciations of religion, against immorality and crime. We hope for a security beyond the law and above the laws, in the prevalence of enlightened and well-principled moral sentiment. We hope to continue and prolong the time when, in the villages and farm-houses of New England, there may be undisturbed sleep within unbarred doors. And knowing that our Government rests directly on the public will, that we may preserve it, we endeavour to give a safe and proper direction to that public will. We do not, indeed, expect all men to be philosophers or statesmen—but we confidently trust, and our expectation of the duration of our system of Government rests on that trust, that by the diffusion of general knowledge, and good and virtuous sentiments, the political fabric may be secure, as well against open violence and overthrow as against the slow but sure undermining of licentiousness."

Dr. Ryerson was one of the Commissioners appointed to examine into the state of King's College, and after visiting this Province, he came to the conclusion that the system now in operation in Canada was applicable to this country. He (Mr. Connell) thought that what he had first read was highly applicable here; he concurred with every word of it. The people should have the control of the Parish Schools; and the fact that the number of scholars in Canada West had increased from fifty to three hundred per cent. since the present law had been in operation, showed the immense benefits to be derived from a system that induced the people to feel an interest in the matter. He had no doubt but the Commissioners had felt deep anxiety that the plan they proposed might produce the desired effect; but he was confident their plans would never answer the purpose. The only mode by which they could ever expect to see a good system of Education established throughout the country, was to pass a law making a tax upon property for that purpose imperative, so that every child in the Province might receive the benefits of education. If the men composing the Executive Government were not independent enough to take up a question of this importance, or if they sought to evade so important a duty, they ought not to remain in power a single day. (Hear! hear!) He considered it the duty of the Executive to bring in a Bill; let it be printed and submitted to the people before it became law. Last Session the Hon. Member for Westmorland (Hon. Mr. Smith) brought in a Bill, the object of which was to withhold the annual Provincial Grant to King's College. The then Hon. Attorney General moved a Bill in amendment, which he would read. (The hon. member here read the Bill passed last year.) That Bill was sustained, and under its authority the Government appointed five Commissioners, whose Report was before the House. But what was the result? Why, the Government in exist-

ence when that Commission was appointed was overturned last October, before the Commission had reported, and it appeared that the new Government were not prepared to take any steps towards carrying out what the Commissioners recommended. He believed that, had the House passed the Bill introduced by the Hon. Member for Westmorland last year, they would have had some well digested scheme for Education laid before them by the Government before now. It would have been far better if his hon. friend's Bill had passed, and King's College had been closed for a year or two. (Hear, hear, from hon. Mr. Smith.) In what position were they now? The Government was not prepared to take up the subject—the two members of the Commission who held seats in the House were not prepared to press their measure—and the College was declared on all sides to be utterly useless, but was still going on in the old way, drawing the public money and squandering it away. He would like to see a good Educational measure introduced by the Government, and he thought they would have prepared one, if the Hon. Member from Westmorland's Bill had passed last year; therefore he regretted that it did not pass as the matter stood, and it being late in the Session, no measure could be matured now, and the only thing in their power was to stop the supplies. (The Hon. Member then read an extract from the Act of Endowment passed when King's College was first established.) By that it would be seen that the money was drawn by warrant of the Lieutenant Governor, by and with the advice of the Executive Council. That was an important matter. Let them lay their hands on the £1,100 a-year, and save it for the purposes of Education, when their new measure should be matured. He would be very sorry to see the present Government advise His Excellency to draw any more money for King's College; but if they did, and he should have the opportunity, he would not only advise them, but he would give his vote to deprive them of the privilege of ever advising His Excellency again. (Hear, and laughter.) During the short Session he heard a great deal about the late Government having done those things which they ought not to have done; but of all the wrong things they had done, there was nothing worse than advising the Lieut. Governor to draw money to squander away on King's College; and if the present Government followed in their footsteps, he would not hesitate at the proper time to take his own course with regard to them. The Bill prepared by the Commission went to cut off religious instruction from the Schools. A great deal might be said upon the subject, but he would not go into it now, although he might say much about it. He would simply remark that they had proposed a principle to which he was opposed. He would withhold the annual grant, and let the Professors go on half pay. He believed he was correct when he stated that what are now called the College Lands were originally reserved for Educational purposes, and not for a College in particular. Well, they were all claimed by the College, and somehow the rents had decreased, and the lands had shrunk up, and some of them had disappeared. Some of them, many years ago, got into the hands of certain members of the Executive Council in an unaccountable manner. However, with the endowment of £1,100 a year on the Civil List establishment, and the rents on the lands still remaining, the College would have an income of about £1,500 a-year, after the Provincial allowance of £1,100 a-year was withheld, and that was ample for the establishment in its present useless condition. He hoped the House would not be led away by any specious arguments to keep up the establishment of King's College, or connect it in any manner with such Educational