

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

FROM MR. TAYLOR'S REPORTS.

Friday, 2d March, 1855.

Election Bill recommitted at 11 o'clock.

His Honor the Speaker said that he did not intend to occupy much time on the subject. He was in favor of vote by ballot, and registration of voters, but did not think that the Country required an extension of the franchise.

Mr. Harding advocated vote by ballot, registration of voters, and also universal suffrage.

Mr. Steadman spoke in a similar manner to that of Mr. Harding, and expressed his belief that the country was prepared for universal suffrage at the present time.

Mr. Kerr was in favor of vote by ballot, and registration of voters, but did not think that the country required an extension of the suffrage.

Mr. Gilbert would be willing to extend the franchise to leaseholders, but no further, but highly approved of vote by ballot and registration of voters.

Mr. Stevens would go for the extension of the franchise, if it could be done so as to prevent persons from voting who had no right to do so—He approved of registration of voters and vote by ballot, and would vote accordingly.

Mr. Street moved an amendment to the first Section of the bill, to the effect that the franchise be not extended, which elicited a regular round of speeches. The present Government and its friends declaring that if the amendment passed, it would virtually destroy the Bill, that then there would be one of two courses for the Government to adopt, either to resign, or dissolve the House; while some members of the late Government declared as their belief that no such results would follow, and that the object they had in view, was to make the Bill as perfect as possible.

On the question being taken on Mr. Street's amendment, the committee divided as follows—Yeas, Messrs. Street, Hayward, Montgomery, Gray, Wilmot, and Gilbert.—6

Nays, Hons. Attorney General, Solicitor General, Surveyor General, Ritchie, Smith, and Provincial Secretary, and Messrs. Tibbits, Rice, Connell, McPherson, Taylor, Hatheway, Lunt, Ferris, Purdy, Partelow, Harding, Stevens, McLelan, Cutler, McPhelim, Eal, McNaughton, Botsford, Kerr, Sutton, Gilmour, McAdam, Boyd, Steadman, Landry, and His Honor the Speaker.—32

Mr. Cutler then moved an amendment to the effect that the franchise be extended to all rate-payers, seconded by Mr. Connell.

On the question being taken on the amendment, the committee divided, Yeas, Messrs. Cutler, Connell, and Steadman.—3

Nays, all the rest of the Committee.—35.

The question was then taken on the 1st Section of the bill, when the Committee again divided, Yeas, Honbles. Attorney General, Solicitor General, Surveyor General, Provincial Secretary, Ritchie, and Smith, and Messrs. Tibbits, Rice, Connell, Hatheway, McPherson, Taylor, Lunt, Ferris, Purdy, Harding, Partelow, McLelan, Steadman, Landry, Cutler, McPhelim, Botsford, Sutton, Gilmour, and McAdam.—26.

Nays, His Honor the Speaker, and Messrs. Street, Hayward, Montgomery, Wilmot, Gray, End, McNaughton, Kerr, Stevens.—10

On motion the Chairman reported Progress, and the House adjourned at 7 o'clock.

Saturday, 3d March.

Mr. Boyd again moved his resolution to withhold grants from Denominational Schools.

Mr. Wilmot moved an amendment that from and after January, 1857, no more such grants be made.

Hon. Solicitor General on account of so many members being out on Committees, would move the previous question, which was carried.

A Bill to continue the several Acts relating to the Aroostook Boom Company committed and passed.

Messrs. Rice and Tibbits, fully explained the bill, that all parties interested had agreed to it, and that proper provision had been made to open the Boom when required. They therefore saw no objections why it should not pass.

At 12 o'clock the Election bill recommitted.

Mr. Botsford moved an amendment to the 3rd Section.

Hon. Attorney General said that the Government had considered every Section of it, and had thought of the very thing pointed out by the Hon. Member, and had unanimously agreed that it was better as it now stood. He therefore hoped that his Hon. friend would not press his motion.

Mr. Gray observed that he had fought hard

against the bill for several days, but the Government had carried it by an overwhelming majority. He therefore did not feel disposed to offer any further opposition, but if it did not work well let the responsibility rest where it ought, on the Government, for his part he thought that it would be found to work most disastrously.

Messrs. Montgomery and Wilmot concurred in the remarks made by the Hon. Member from St. John, (Mr. Gray,) and did not feel disposed to interfere further with it.—Amendment lost.

Mr. Street moved an amendment that the expenses incurred to prepare a register, be paid out of the Province Chest instead of the County funds.

For the motion, Yeas, Messrs. Street, Montgomery, Botsford and McNaughton.

Nays, all the rest of the Committee.

Mr. Street also moved an amendment to the 20th Section, to compel candidates to have their deeds on record 6 months previous to the test of the Writ.

Hon. Attorney General said that the section was an exact copy of the old law, as there had been no difficulty in that respect under it, he hoped that it would be allowed to stand as it was, for no benefit could result from it, the candidate must have three hundred Pounds real estate in his possession, and if he was elected, and thrown out on that score, he could put his deed on record, and before another election took place six months would have passed, and the people would re-elect him, therefore the result would be the same.—Amendment lost, and the bill passed.

House adjourned.

Monday, 5th March.

A Bill committed to amend the Acts, relating to the Nashwaak Boom Company.

Mr. Hatheway said that there was a Petition on the files of the House, from 60 to 70 persons of St. Marys who were interested in lumber operations, who were in favour of the Bill, and requested that the amendment might be made. He was aware that there was a Petition against it from five or six persons connected with the Boom Company. In justice to the parties who had petitioned, and who would have lumber come down the river next Spring, he hoped the Bill would pass.

Honble Attorney General wished to do justice to all parties. He felt the question to be an embarrassing one. He would suggest that the Chairman report progress, and let there be a select Committee appointed of three Members, who were not interested in the matter, and report to the House as to the best course to pursue.

After a few remarks from Messrs. Street, Tibbits, Taylor, and McPherson, the proposition was acceded to, and a Committee appointed for that purpose.

A Bill to divide the Parish of Carleton, in the County of Kent,—passed.

Election Bill recommitted, and the polling places for the different Counties having been inserted, the Chairman reported the Bill as agreed to.

Mr. Street observed that he did not intend to divide the House on the question just now, but gave notice that when the Bill came up for a third reading, he would then divide the House on it.

Mr. Boyd moved his Resolution to withhold further grants to Denominational Schools.

Mr. Connell immediately after moved his amendment, and stated that this was a matter of some importance, and one that he had turned his attention to ever since he had held a seat in the Legislature. The subject was one of great interest to the people of this Province as to the future education of the youth of the country. His views were contained in his amendment. He approved of the Resolution moved by the Honble Member from Charlotte (Mr. Boyd,) still the amendment he considered the most fair, as it would not cut off the grants without giving all parties notice, as they would have a year to prepare. The subject of Kings College was one that had taken up a great deal of the time of the Legislature. The matter had been fully discussed last year, and a Commission was appointed, which was against his views, but a majority had decided against him.—He would let that subject pass for the present.—He would like to have such an educational establishment, as the people had entire confidence in. He considered it to be one of the first duties of the Government to make ample provision for educational purposes, where such branches may be taught, as are usually taught in Universities. As to the College he felt convinced that the people would rather see it closed, than to have it kept up at such an enormous expence to the Province. In the Common Schools he would like to have the teachers more amply provided for, based on some compulsory taxation system, in order to compel the people to feel that they had some interest in

the subject of the education of the youth of the country. He wanted to have a School in every district of every County in the Province, and the property of the country be made to contribute toward the support of such Schools, and that the children of all denominations, be educated together; and taught to love each other; for what a child learned in its youth, it seldom forgot in after life. He was also anxious that when they were being educated that they should receive a Christian education, and that the Scriptures should be recognized in all such Schools, as he believed that all whose education was not founded on the word of God, would be of little value to the country. A Christian education he considered was one of the greatest blessings that could be bestowed on those around us. Let the foundation stone of public instruction in the Province be the Scriptures, as it is a book which has withstood error for ages, and will do so to the end of time. The infant generation of to-day will be the adult generation of to-morrow, and it very much depends on how we now instruct them as to what they will be. It must be painful to any Christian man to see a child whose education has been neglected, brought before a Court of Justice, and perhaps sent to the Penitentiary. He hoped that the Statutes of New Brunswick would be such as would recognize the Scriptures in all our Schools; as the first instruction that a child receives is the last to be forgotten. He felt this to be an important subject, as it was one in which the rising generation was deeply interested.

In corroboration of his ideas he would read the following extract

FROM DR. RYERSON'S REPORT.

My first remark is, that the system of Common School instruction should, like the Legislature which has established, and the Government that administers it, be non-Sectarian and National. It should be considered in a Provincial rather than a Denominational point of view—in reference to its bearing upon the condition and interests of the country at large—and not upon those of particular religious persuasions as distinct from public interests, or upon the interests of one religious persuasion more than upon those of another. And thus may be observed the difference between a mere Sectarian and a Patriot—between one who considers the Institutions and Legislation and Government of his country in a sectarian spirit, and another who regards them in a patriotic spirit.—The one places his seat above his country, and supports or opposes every public law or measure of Government just as it may or may not promote the interests of his own sect irrespective of the public interests and in rivalry with those of other sects; the other views the well being of his country as the great end to be proposed and pursued, and the sects as among the instrumentalities tributary to that end. Some indeed have gone to the extreme of viewing all religious persuasions as evils to be dreaded, and as far as possible proscribed; but an enlightened and patriotic spirit rather views them as holding and propagating in common, the great principles of virtue and morality, which form the basis of the safety and happiness of society; and therefore as distinct agencies more or less promotive of its interests—their very rivalships tending to stimulate to greater activity and therefore as a whole more beneficial than injurious. I think a National system of public instruction should be in harmony with this National spirit.

I remark again, that a system of public instruction should be in harmony with the views and feelings of the great body of the people, especially of the better educated classes. I believe the number of persons in Upper Canada who would theoretically or practically exclude Christianity in all its forms as an essential element in the education of the country, is exceedingly small, and that more than nine-tenths of the people regard religious instruction as an essential and vital part of the education of their offspring. On this as well as on higher grounds, I lay it down as a fundamental principle that religious instruction must form a part of the education of the youth of our country, and that that religious instruction must be given by the several religious persuasions to their youth respectively. There would be no Christianity among us were it not for the religious persuasions since they collectively, constitute the Christianity of the country, and, separately, the several agencies by which Christian doctrines and Worship and morals are maintained and diffused throughout the length and breadth of the land. If in the much that certain writers have said about and against "Sectarian teaching," and against "Sectarian bias," in the education of youth, it means to proscribe or ignore the religious teaching of youth by sects or religious persua-

sions; then is it the theory, if not the design of such writers to preclude religious truth altogether from the minds of the youth of the land, and thus prepare the way for raising up a nation of infidels.—But if on the other hand, it be insisted, as it has been by some, that as each religious persuasion is the proper religious instructor of its own youth, therefore each religious persuasion should have its own elementary schools, and that thus denominational common schools should supersede our present public common schools, and the School Fund be appropriated to the denominations instead of to the Municipalities; I remark that this theory is equally fallacious with the former, and is fraught with consequences, no less fatal to the interests of universal education than is the former theory to the interests of all Christianity."

The Parish School Law expires on the 1st of May, and he trusted that whatever the Government might lay before the Legislature on the subject of education, it would be satisfactory to the people of the Province.

Mr. End denied that the grants given to denominational schools caused dissatisfactions and heart-burnings, but on the contrary it served to allay them. He believed that Kings College would have been in a much better condition, than it is now if there had not been so much grumbling, and fault finding; for he believed that it was impossible for any institution to prosper under such circumstances. As to the Resolution moved by the Honble Member (Mr. Boyd,) he believed his whole aim was at the Roman Catholics, (Mr. Boyd, nothing of the kind.) He was glad to hear him disclaim such intentions, but it appeared to be very much like it to him. The country he thought was not prepared to discontinue such grants at the present time, and he would vote against both the resolution, and the amendment.

Mr. Taylor thought that such a Resolution ought not to have been brought forward until after it was ascertained what scheme the Government intended to bring forward. Neither did he think that it would be fair to withhold such grants, when such persons as Mr. Allison had come forward and given so liberally out of his own pocket for educational purposes. He thought that the Resolution and the amendment had both better be withdrawn for the present time.

Honble Surveyor General agreed with the remarks made by the Honble Member from York, (Mr. Taylor,) that the resolution was premature. The amendment was the same in principle as the Report of the Commissioners. He felt the subject to be one of the most difficult that could be brought before the Legislature, or that had ever attracted the attention of any deliberative body.—Even in the old Country it had almost shaken the kingdom to its foundation. The School law he was aware, would expire on the first of May, and whether it would be continued for another year, or whether a new law would be enacted he was not prepared to say at present. He thought however that the resolution and the amendment had better be withdrawn until after the Report on Kings College had been taken up and decided on.

Mr. Cutler thought that the principle embodied in the Resolution was correct, and agreed with a part of the amendment; but he did not think that now was the proper time to introduce them. He had no idea of marking out a line for the Government to pursue. The present School law expires on the first of May, and he had all along thought that the Government intended to give that subject the go by for the present Session. As to making the Scriptures an elementary book in our Parish Schools, he would forbear making any remarks on that subject for the present. He hoped that neither the resolution or amendment would be pressed at the present time, and if they were, that they would not pass.

Mr. Steadman did not think that such a resolution ought to have been brought forward at the present time, although he agreed with the principle that it contained, but thought that they ought to wait and see what measures the Government would bring down. Whenever Kings College was placed on the same footing as other institutions, he would then support such a resolution, and not till then.

Mr. Street thought that the subject of education was a subject for the Government to take up. The Report on Kings College was an able one, as far as he was able to judge. He considered that it would be wrong to stop the grants to those institutions that had been receiving them for years, without sufficient notice being given.

Mr. McPhelim thought the Resolution a step in the right direction. He thought the Roman Catholics could do without such grants as well as any other denomination, for all they received would not amount to more than a penny to each