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The School Bill Was Discussed by the House in Committee

Hon. Mr. Veniot Urged the Appointment of Additional Inspectors for the Northern Section of the Province—Tells of Rapid Increase in the Population—No Action to be Taken This Year.

Following is the continuation of the synopsis report of Thursday's proceedings in the Legislature:

HON. MR. ROBERTS moved the adjournment of the debate which was made the order of the day for Tuesday at three o'clock.

HON. MR. MAGEE submitted the third annual report of the New Brunswick Vocational Board.

The House then went into Committee, with Mr. Hayes in the Chair and took up further consideration of the bill to consolidate the Schools Act.

HON. MR. VENIOT, on the section fixing the age limit for pupils at from six to twenty years, said he thought the Committee should consider the advisability of admitting pupils at the age of five years. He understood that that was done in most of the other provinces. The fact that the age limit in New Brunswick is six years, militated against the province in the Dominion census return, as it gave a larger percentage of illiterate children than were shown in other provinces. He did not want a change made without first consulting the Board of Education. He would ask that the section be allowed to stand.

HON. MR. BYRNE said he had no objection to the section standing, but he wished to say that the section had been taken from the old Act.

MR. FLEWELLING said that the age limit in Ontario was seven years, and he believed that to be better than six.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that personally he believed that a child of five years was old enough to go to school.

MR. YOUNG said he agreed with the Hon. Minister of Public Works and thought the section should stand.

MR. HAYES said he agreed with the hon. member for Charlotte that six years was enough. In St. John they had kindergartens for children under six years.

MR. YOUNG said that might be all right for cities, but there were no kindergartens in country districts. It might be well to give children of five years permission to attend school, especially in the summer months.

MR. ESTABROOKS speaking to a sub-section concerning the visiting of schools by trustees, said that the

words "at least monthly" should be deleted as most trustees did not observe the regulation.

HON. MR. BYRNE said it was just as well to leave the section as it was.

MR. SMITH (Albert) asked about successful vaccination.

HON. DR. ROBERTS said it was the use of the recognized vaccine properly applied with the reaction about the third day, the reaction varying with the condition of the subject.

MR. SMITH (Albert) said he asked the question because of the practise of doctors in giving certificates immediately after vaccination.

HON. MR. ROBERTS said that was unfortunately true and had been the custom for many years. Under the Health Act an effort was being made to have physicians stop that. Difficulties were presented in the country districts.

MR. YOUNG asked if there was a vaccine of a serum for influenza?

HON. MR. ROBERTS said there were such but they were in the experimental stage.

MR. YOUNG said that in his section serum had been used with success.

HON. MR. BYRNE, speaking to the section relating to qualifications of teachers at school meetings, said that an amendment had been suggested by the hon. Minister of Public Works to prevent non-residents from voting. The objection having been raised that their votes often were not in the best interests of education.

MR. SCULLY said there was a disposition to put heavy taxes on non-residents of cities and towns which had schools boards.

HON. MR. VENIOT said he did not object to the further amendment suggested. He favored the original amendment because he knew in many sections the non-resident vote was manipulated to retard the progress of education.

MR. ESTABROOKS said he could not support the amendment, as in most school districts it was difficult to get a quorum of either residents or non-residents.

MR. MELANSON said that with the provision excepting towns and cities the amendment was satisfactory.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that the principle of one man vote was adopted in the Election Act and could be applied to the Schools Act. Nova Scotia already had adopted the principle.

MR. PECK asked if a point company could be represented at school meetings.

HON. MR. FOSTER said the object was to improve educational facilities. A non-resident was more likely to be interested in avoiding taxes than in improving a school.

MR. RICHARDS said he was not sure that the change was desirable at the present time.

The amendment was carried 12 to 4.

HON. MR. BYRNE said that a section of the bill gave the Board of Education power to create eight inspectorial districts, but his hon. friend the Minister of Public Works thought that the number should be increased to ten, and had the section stood over. Personally he thought that eight inspectorial districts was sufficient for the province in the present state of the finances and he would oppose any increase.

HON. MR. VENIOT said he did not wish to depart from the principle of economy, but he thought that eight inspectors was insufficient. The population had increased rapidly in the northern part of the province, and there were not sufficient inspectors to do the work. All that he asked for was that power be given the Board of Education to make the increase wherever it was found necessary and moved an amendment to that effect.

HON. MR. BYRNE said that if conditions should arise in the future to make additional inspectors necessary

the Act could easily be amended. To add two more inspectors to the list would cost at least \$7000 and the province could not afford that. If authority was given the Board of Education he knew enough of human nature to know that there would immediately be a demand for appointment. The present government had dealt generously with its school inspectors.

MR. TAYLOR said that if there was congestion in some sections the districts might be re-arranged.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that he felt strongly on the question, and had gone into it very carefully. He thought it poor economy to let education go to the dogs for the sake of saving \$7000. He held that there was too much work for an inspector in some districts, especially in the northern part of the province. The inspectors had as many as 245 schools to look after, and it was hard for them to get over their districts. In some sections the French people were suffering for want of proper school inspection. They had only two inspectors for 120,000 people, while there were five for English-speaking people of the province. He felt sure that two additional inspectors were needed.

MR. MELANSON said he agreed with the remarks made by the Hon. Minister of Public Works. He thought there should be more inspectors in the northern part of the province, which included Kent county.

(Continued on page five)

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