

EDUCATION.

On motion of hon. Attorney General, the debate on the Education Bill was resumed.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—Mr. Speaker, before the adjournment took place this morning, I rose to make a few observations in reply to the long oration of the hon. member for Belfast (Hon. Mr. Davies) upon the Education Laws of this Colony. It is rather a novel idea for a member of the Government, who is responsible for all the acts of the Government, and should have expressed his opinions on the subject when the motion for the second reading of the Bill was made, to have thought proper to keep back his views until you put the question to go into committee on the subject. I rise now merely to reply to one or two charges made by that hon. member against this side of the House, relative to our policy upon the question which has been brought up by the letter that is now on our table from His Lordship the Bishop of Charlottetown, requesting the Government of the Colony to grant a certain sum of money in aid of St. Dunstan's College and other schools under his control. The hon. gentleman, in the course of his address this morning, stated that the question of sectarian schools being brought before the House was the result of a conspiracy between the ex-Colonial Secretary and the Tory faction—he would not call them a party. I hope the hon. member understands the meaning of the word he has used, as he is a champion of education. The hon. member, chameleon-like, changes his opinions very quickly. Last year he spoke in favor of education, and a short time ago he said that a good education would be a curse to a man.

Hon. Mr. DAVIES.—I said a classical education would be a curse to the common people.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—I think a classical education would be an accomplishment to any man. Even a farmer might, with pleasure and profit, sit down to an evening to read a page of Virgil or Horace, or read a chapter of the Old Testament in Hebrew, or the New Testament in Greek. The hon. member gave us a history of Education from 1551 up to the present period, but I think the people will not have to thank him much if they attain to a high state of education, for he wishes them to know merely the rudiments of an English education. This is not the method of the day in other countries; it is not the method of Prussia, that country to which the hon. member alluded, and said that our laws were superior to theirs; but if he will take the trouble to examine the education laws of that country, he will ascertain that the son of the peasant cultivator, not only a common, but a high education, without any cost to himself, and I believe the Prussian said superior to every other nation as regards their literary attainments. The Prussians have taken their position in Europe as a first class power, and I believe the reason of it is on account of the schoolmaster he attended. The hon. member charges this side of the House with bringing up this question relative to religious education, but unless he will have the rashness to state that His Lordship consulted the Conservative party before he made the demand upon the present Government, he cannot establish his position. All I can say is that I never had any communication, either verbally or by letter, either directly or indirectly, with His Lordship on the subject. I accidentally heard that the matter was before the Government, and that I pledged a notice on the Order Book to have it brought before the House. That hon. member (Mr. Davies) has colleagues who do not share the responsibility of the demand of His Lordship. Hon. Mr. Howland did so very valiantly the other evening, and the hon. Leader of the Government also stated that he was in favor of it, and it is well known that he is a Conservative. The Conservative party, by not having done with this matter, they have placed themselves behind the scenes of the clergy of the Catholic Church. If the hon. member found his argument what has appeared in the *Islander* newspaper, he must establish the fact that that paper is the exponent of the views of this side of the House before he can make his argument good; but if he will go to the *Islander* newspaper, he will find that the question of separate schools was advocated there before it was spoken of in the *Islander*, and that paper has been the organ of the party in power. The hon. member certainly laid down some extraordinary principles—and namely he would say that no system was so good as the sectarian, and then he would say that no person could understand his religious teachers until he went to a common school.

Hon. Mr. DAVIES.—I did not say that sectarian schools were advisable.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—Then the hon. member would annihilate one of the greatest of the Christian graces. He did not want charity schools in this Island. He said the same care should be taken of the poor man's child as the rich man's. For instance, said he, should not the Premier's child attend the same school as the child of the poorest man in the land? I do not differ from him on that point, but I can say that there is nothing so mean or contemptible about going to a charity school as he would make it appear. Some of the greatest men in England have been educated at charity schools—schools that have been founded by grants of charitable persons; therefore the hon. member need not turn up his nose at schools that are supported by charity. Then he said there was no need of the school under the Bishop's care, because we have the Free Education Act; but His Lordship says that there are five hundred scholars residing in the parishes of this Island, and that notwithstanding the facilities we have for education, there is still a wide field for charitable schools. For instance, we have no provision for children under five years of age; we have no infant schools, while, in all large cities, there are institutions of this kind. A child by the time he is five years of age can learn a great deal, and if he is not taught something useful he will learn a great amount of mischief, which will require considerable training to eradicate from his mind. We have enacted some very good laws on the subject of education, but we must not be too proud of our actions. We must not be like the frog in the pond, who sees only his own pond.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—I will read such portions of the Proclamation as I may deem necessary, and it will be seen whether it referred to Orange Societies or not.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—Mr. Speaker, in reference to the question before the House, I had not an opportunity the last time I spoke of replying to one or two remarks of the hon. Leader of the Government. I understood him to say, when I referred to the Proclamation issued in 1852 by Sir Alexander Bannerman, that it did not refer to Orange Lodges. We had Responsible Government then, and His Excellency, I presume, would not issue a proclamation on his own account, without the advice of his Council.

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I heard that that he had carried the Catholic Emancipation Act of this Colony, but I find it was carried in 1830, and the Hon. Mr. Coles did not figure in politics for twelve years after that. That was the time, in my humble opinion, when the Catholics of Prince Edward Island were put upon an equality with their Protestant fellow subjects. I think that in place of him (Hon. Mr. Coles) having raised the Catholics out of the dust, the Catholics have put him in a high position of honor and emolument. We know, Sir, that before the hon. Leader's day Catholics exercised their legitimate influence in the councils of this Island. I saw one in the position which you, Sir, now occupy; and the late Dr. Conroy, the brother of our Sergeant-at-Arms, occupied a position of great weight, and several others might be mentioned. It is nothing novel for Catholics of this Island to occupy high positions, but one would imagine from the remarks of the hon. Leader of the Government, that before his time the Catholics of this Island were hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Hon. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT.—I spoke of the Liberal Catholics on the Island.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—With all due respect to the hon. Leader of the Government, he made no distinction between Liberal Catholics and others; he spoke of the whole Catholic population of the Island. The celebrated Bible question took place in consequence of an Act, not of the Conservative, but of the Liberal party. The cause of this question was the speech of Mr. Stark, the School Visitor, at the celebrated Soiree at the opening of the Normal School, in which he explained the working of the institution as follows:—

"The moral department will be carried on by the opening and closing of the institution by prayer, according to the regulation of the Board of Education, by a daily Bible lesson (the first exercise of the day after opening) in which the truths and facts of Scripture will be brought before the children's minds by illustrations and picturing out in words, in language, simple and easy to be understood, from which everything sectarian or controversial shall be carefully excluded."

That was the paragraph in the speech of Mr. Stark, which the Bishop, misunderstanding, and thought that it was to be compulsory that every child who attended that school was, *volens volens*, to be compelled to read the Bible. The Protestant clergy, men held meetings; and then the divergence took place, and has remained ever since, between the Roman Catholic party and a large section of the Protestant party. But the hon. member was wrong in saying that the Conservatives were chargeable with all the discontent between the parties, on this question. If he refers to the Debates, he will find that many of the Liberal members did not side with the Catholics in the House on this Bible question, but voted for the Bible being kept in the schools, and among the number were yourself, Mr. Speaker, the father of the hon. member from Bedford, (Mr. Laird), and a member from Belfast—who never shirked a vote, but always went with the Liberals on that time—Mr. Murray.

Hon. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT.—The hon. Leader of the Opposition thinks that because a few of the Liberal party voted in favor of the Bible being in the schools, that the Conservative party are not responsible for the disturbances which arose; but the disturbance on this subject took place long before the question was brought up in the House. It was in 1852 that 18,000 of the Catholics coming out of the dust, for up to that time no Liberal Catholic had any privileges; but I referred to the Act passed, and I did endeavor to do them a favor; the Conservatives wiped out that favor. The hon. member stated that I said I was in favor of that grant; but I did not go so far as that. I was referring to the fact that was given when the grant was given to the Prince of Wales College; but I said it was now impossible to carry a vote of that kind, on account of the agitation which the Conservatives had raised on the subject, and although many Protestants had joined with the Catholics, yet there was no doing against that grant. I do not hesitate to say that if, at that time, the grant had been given, it would have been given to St. Andrew's College, and I do not think it was right to take it away merely because the College was removed to another situation; but, although I tried to get the grant, it was voted down. The Opposition appears to be very solicitous about the rights of His Lordship the Bishop, now; but we know how he was treated by them on former occasions; he was denounced as every thing that was bad, and it was said that the children should be taught to hate his religion. It is all very fine for them to say: what are you going to do in reference to this question; but they do not come out manfully, as the Government have done. But I suppose they want to please both Catholics and Protestants, and they will not say whether they are opposed to give the grant or not. The editor of the *Islander* played his game very well. He thought he had the Government in a fix. If they brought down a resolution to give the grant, the Protestants would be up in arms; and if they refused to do so, the Catholics would be displeased. The present party wish to give the Education Act a fair trial, although there may be a difference of opinion on some points. In the Imperial Parliament I think there is a little more toleration among politicians than there is here, for we know there is a Government in office there who have not a party in power of their own opinions.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—Mr. Speaker, in reference to the question before the House, I had not an opportunity the last time I spoke of replying to one or two remarks of the hon. Leader of the Government. I understood him to say, when I referred to the Proclamation issued in 1852 by Sir Alexander Bannerman, that it did not refer to Orange Lodges. We had Responsible Government then, and His Excellency, I presume, would not issue a proclamation on his own account, without the advice of his Council.

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Lodge, a Mr. Cameron, went to England on business connected with the Society, he was admitted into His Majesty's presence. The attempt to strangle this institution was an unjust act; but it only served to strengthen the cause. The hon. Leader of the Government made some strange assertions. He asserted that he had never made any promises to his Catholic supporters, in reference to their educational institutions.

Hon. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT.—I said I was never asked by them to do so.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—It appears that he has lost the power to render them the service which he is under obligations to do, and would do if his colleagues in the Government would permit him.

Hon. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT.—I stated that I had never been asked by any Catholic in the Island to give this grant, and I never made any promises on the subject.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—The hon. member from Belfast affirmed that our educational system was superior to that of Prussia. Now, Sir, there was a person who, I presume, was a very competent judge—I refer to a Professor of Queen's College, Dublin—and he held an opinion something similar before he visited Prussia; but, after visiting that country, he returned and delivered his opinions on the subject at a meeting held in Ireland, and he was decidedly in favor of compulsory education, as practiced in Prussia. But, to affirm that our system of education is absolutely free, is not correct, for persons are taxed to support it, and persons who have no children to send to school are taxed to build school-houses. It is my humble opinion, as the result of considerable experience and observation, that, unless there were some amount of compulsion exercised on the people and the scholars, our educational system would be a failure.

The House then resolved itself into a Committee of the whole on the Bill.

Mr. G. Sinclair in the Chair.

Several clauses were then read and agreed to.

BALDWINSTON, Reporter.

Mr. ARSENAULT.—I would move that the Board of Education hold their meetings six times a year.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—Some hon. members think the examination of candidates for teachers by the Board should take place once in two months instead of every month as at present. It would I think be well to give the Board the option of meeting as often or as infrequently as may require. Monthly examinations are not required, and I believe that the proposed arrangement will facilitate the examination of teachers more than the present system. The ordinary meetings of the Board will be held every month as at present. If by any occasion requires it this clause leave it optional with them to hold an additional examination.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—Assuming that only six examinations take place in a year, I should like to know why so great a difference is to be made between the salaries of the examiners and those of the ordinary members of the Board of Education. The Attorney General has stated that it is difficult to estimate the amount of business transacted by the Board every month, and that consequently they have no fixed salaries. He suggested that as a salary why examiners should be appointed; but I do not understand why those who are overpaid should have only 20 each while the examiners who meet only once in two months are allowed £20 each per annum. I should like to know the reason of this difference.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—The hon. member (Mr. Murray) has said that he is of opinion that these examiners have all the duties of ordinary members of the Board to perform, as they will meet with regularity for the purpose of examining candidates. The object in appointing examiners is the same in almost every other country, to obtain the services of men of superior attainments, who thoroughly understand what capabilities and qualifications a teacher should have. Men of high attainments must be proportionally paid for their services. The most valuable members are not always proficient in all the branches of the subject, and I believe the hon. member for Murray Harbor himself would be a most valuable member of the Board, but he would not do for an examiner. If I had the labor of examining teachers I should think one pound a year too small a sum to remunerate me for my services. Gentlemen who are invaluable as ordinary members of the Board, who understand all the necessities of the country and the requirements of the people may not be competent to examine teachers; and again, there are many men with local experience who would prove to be excellent examiners. A man may be able to judge whether a teacher has behaved morally or not, and whether a school district has a sufficient number of children or not, and yet might not be fit to examine a teacher. Can you expect to procure the services of competent men unless a sum is offered to reward them for their time and labor? This system would only cause the examination of teachers to be held one month later than under the old Act, and I think as the candidates come before the Board from time to time, that six times a year would be quite often enough. Whenever circumstances arise to require an additional meeting it can be held. If any gentleman of attainments offers to examine candidates for the office of teacher, it is easy to see that £20 would be a most valuable remuneration for his valuable services. Any gentleman capable of making a searching examination in all the higher branches which are required to be taught by Grammar School Teachers, and who performs his duty faithfully, deserves at least £20. I think the allowance should be £40 or £50 for a gentleman of those qualifications.

The clause was then agreed to, and also the next respecting stationary for the Secretary of the Board.

The clause relating to the increase of the Secretary's salary was then read.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—The salary of the Secretary of the Board of Education, which I have mentioned only £50, and if any office entails a heavy charge, there is an entail upon that office. If any one doubts this let him inspect the records of that office, for, I myself, know something of the extraordinary duties devolving upon him. The whole educational grant passes through his hands, and the journals kept by the teachers, who now number 135, are returned to him. I need not state that the inspection of all these papers is a very large and arduous duty, which must be faithfully performed, for it is one of extreme responsibility. With respect to the present incumbent, I do not think that any gentleman ever discharged his duties more efficiently, and yet he has been miserably paid. Now the question is what sum shall be placed in the blank contained in the clause before us. I move that the blank be filled up by the words "sixty five pounds."

Some time ago I had a conversation with the Secretary of the Board of Education of Halifax who receives two or three hundred pounds per annum for his services, and when I told him that our Secretary received only £50, he held up his hands in surprise. The amount which I propose is not large, and is no more than is due to the present incumbent.

Mr. BAY.—The salary of the Secretary should be £100, if that office is to be paid according to the labour performed. Teachers expect him to advance their salaries before the money becomes due as they often cannot wait for their warrants, on account of some demands for money having been made upon them. I remember one case where a teacher wrote to the Secretary to make him a (Laughter).

Mr. BRACKEN.—I agree with the hon. member who has just taken his seat, upon the efficient manner in which the Secretary of the Board has discharged his duties. I believe the duties pertaining to his office are exceedingly arduous and I do not believe the people would begrudge him £100 a year.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—I fully concur with the remarks which have just been made, for the salary of the Secretary should at least equal that of the Grammar School Teachers in the country. As to the ordinary amount of labour which he performs, if any gentleman who frequents this building about quarter days, does not see sufficient to convince him that the Secretary is amply employed, I do not know what he would require for profit.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—Teachers are required to make affidavits on their quarterly and half-yearly returns, and as there are 315 Teachers on the Island, the Secretary has to examine 1260 journals, and to see that they are all correct. He has also to see that the trustees of the district schools are properly elected, and that all these schools are registered. In these details there is an immense labor for that officer.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—In the other Colonies teachers send in all their journals on the same quarter days, and if any teacher opens a school in the middle of a quarter, he sends in his certificates for the payment, and therefore his next quarter begins on the same day with the others. If things were conducted here on the same principle it might save a great deal of trouble; besides this, teachers would not be obliged to wait so long for their pay as they do at present, on account of the irregularity in sending in the journals.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—I will read such portions of the Proclamation as I may deem necessary, and it will be seen whether it referred to Orange Societies or not.

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Mr. P. SINCLAIR.—Warrants are not issued quarterly; and, therefore, the whole of the hon. member's arguments fall to the ground.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—Are there not quarter days?

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—There are no settled quarter days, teachers all submitting from the first day of their respective months to any particular time of the year. One may commence at one time and another at another.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—If a teacher should happen to be pressed for money, and his time happens to be up, and the Council have not yet sat, he is obliged to wait for his warrant till the Council sit again; whereas if there was a regular quarter day, it would be more accommodating to the teacher.

Hon. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT.—The minority shall not dictate the amount of salary to be paid this officer, it is the late Government thought his salary too small why did they not raise it? The present Government have agreed to raise his salary; and, therefore, have shown more liberality than the Conservatives, although we have had no complaints with reference to the salary, farther than that his labors are worth more than the amount given.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—I think £25 added to the present salary is all that the Colony can afford just now. The Secretary formally received from the £30 a year, and when the Education Bill of 1861 was before the House, I showed the inadequacy of the amount, and proposed that it be increased to fifty pounds. Under present circumstances I think £75 is as much as is desirable to allow at the present time. Mr. Henderson thought £20 a year too much for the examiners, but he cannot object to this amount.

Hon. Mr. McCAULY.—The Attorney General well knows what the duty of the Opposition is in the case of money grants. But the present grant is not viewed as a political one, it is argued by the Opposition solely on the ground of necessity and equity; and if you imagine that one hundred pounds per year is barely sufficient to support a Grammar School, surely you cannot suppose that it is too much for the individual in whose hands the whole educational machinery centres. The interest of the Colony therefore require that the salary of that officer be increased. I hope the Government will be liberal towards him, as he is generally recognized as one of the best members of the Board, he should not be overlooked.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—I do not think the hon. Attorney General wishes to misrepresent me, but I did not say that I thought the examiners receive too much. I wished to know how it was that there was such a disparagement between the salaries of the examiners and the ordinary members of the Board; and as he has given me to understand that the latter have only to undertake the ordinary business of the Board, while the former are to examine the candidates for the office of teacher, I agreed to the clause.

After the blank in this clause had been filled up with the words "seventy-five pounds" it was agreed to.

The next clause was then read.

Dr. JENKINS.—It seems to me that we do not require the original number of nine members of the Board for the labor to be done as well by five. That the fewer members are, the greater is the amount of business they can do in a given time. I would move that any member who absents himself from the meetings of the Board, be fined in the sum of fifteen shillings for each meeting from which he is absent.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—I cannot agree with the hon. member for Charlottetown on this point. Has he thought of the necessity of each County being represented? As to the number of members of which the Board is composed, experience proves that in a multitude of councillors there is safety, and therefore there will be safety in this as well as in other matters.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—If we are to have only five members, the Board must be chosen from Charlottetown alone, as we could not get a quorum at half the meetings of the Board if we were to have only five members between the Counties. If this amendment were carried out we should be forced to throw aside the idea of representing the other two Counties altogether. I think it will be much better to leave the clause as it is, for if we appoint some members who reside at a distance from Charlottetown they cannot attend the meetings of the Board regularly, and we must have a quorum to do business. I have heard of the members of the Board, and as this is no deviation from the original Act, in respect to the ordinary members of that body, I see no reason to make an offensive alteration while the general desire is to increase the representation from the country districts.

Dr. JENKINS.—I am opposed to centralization, for we should have local Boards, every county should have its own Board. But if we are to have but one central Board, each county should have a fair representation in it, and those who would be obliged to travel long distances to attend the meetings would have their expenses paid. The country should not be forced to pay for services which it never receives. Under the late Act the members were paid whether they attended the monthly meetings of the Board or not; this was a premium on idleness. A member might make a thousand excuses for his absence, although but a trifling matter kept him away. I am opposed to the centering it altogether, we should have local Boards in each of the Counties who would be responsible for the working of the schools in their own divisions.

Mr. McLELLAN.—I agree to a great extent with the remarks made by the hon. member for Charlottetown, especially concerning County Boards. County institutions should be established as in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Canada; and as we are to have a School Visitor for each County, we should also have County Boards. If the Government do not establish these Boards each County should be fairly represented in the central Board. It would be only fair that the Board should have stated members in the other two Counties, because it is a hardship that candidates for the teacher's office should be compelled to come all the way to Charlottetown to attend the meetings of the Board, especially as they are not required to attend the Normal School in future.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—I cannot support the clause as it is at present, because I consider that the principle of paying members of the Board, whether they attend the meetings or not is absurd.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—I am not sorry for the Conservatives introduced this vicious principle.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—The Hon. Mr. Longworth who introduced the Education Bill when the late Government were in power took this matter upon his own shoulders. I never heard an objection urged against the principle by the Opposition of that day, although the hon. Attorney General put ten words in, where I put five on account of his having a great command of language. This point was never agitated at that time, and if he did not then find fault he cannot now blame that Government in introducing it, nor blame me for opposing this clause. I do not think the directors of any institution receive pay when they do not attend to their duties, and the same principle should be carried out in this case. If a member loses his time in attending the meetings of the Board he will be paid for it. But we know that a member may be sometimes detained, as when for instance he has a sad and heir born to him, in that case he would not care to attend and get his salary.

Mr. PROWSE.—It is but fair that the other Counties should be represented in the new Board. There might be a sufficient number appointed in and around Charlottetown to form a quorum for the transaction of all ordinary business, while the representation of the other two Counties is to be transacted, those members living at a distance might be called in.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—The nine ordinary members of the Board would receive eighty-five pounds each attended regularly. I think the sum which each should lose on account of his absence ought to be given to those who attend the meetings of the Board. If some members do not attend let their shares go to increase the salaries of those who do attend.

the allowance to each member should be deducted in case of absence, was put to the House and lost. The clause as it stood in the Bill was then agreed to.

The next two clauses were agreed to.

The Committee then rose; the Chairman reported progress, and asked for leave to sit again.

House adjourned till ten o'clock on Monday.

I O'NEILL, Reporter.

MONDAY, April 13.

Morning Session.

House went into Committee on the further consideration of the Bill for the incorporation of the Baptist Church, at North River.

Mr. Bell in the Chair.

The Bill being read clause by clause, was reported agreed to and ordered to be engrossed.

Mr. P. Sinclair, from the Committee on Public Accounts, submitted the report, which was ordered to be committed to a Committee of the whole House on Wednesday next.

House then went into Committee on the further consideration of the Bill on Education.

Mr. G. Sinclair in the Chair.

Several paragraphs were read and agreed to without eliciting a debate of any importance.

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair, progress was reported, and leave asked to sit again.

House adjourned for one hour.

R. GORDON, Reporter.

Afternoon Session.

On motion of Hon Attorney General, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the whole on the further consideration of the Education Bill.

Several clauses were read and agreed to. The clause prohibiting teachers from embarking in mercantile pursuits was read.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—The object of this clause is to prevent teachers from opening a regular store, or engaging in business in such a manner as to engross so much of their time that they shall be unable to discharge their duties as teachers efficiently. A case came before the Board of Education, in which it was alleged that a teacher had bought thirty bushels of oats and sold them at a profit, but the Board thought that such a transaction could hardly be denominated engaging in a mercantile pursuit.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—I should like to hear the hon. Attorney General define what entering regularly into business is. If a school teacher undertakes to purchase grain in considerable quantities, and trades in it, and spends such a portion of his time as disqualifies him for properly discharging his duties during school hours, it should be deemed a violation of that clause.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—This is only the law as it was formerly, no change has been made as far as a definition goes, it means entering into a systematic course of business, and does not refer to one isolated case of buying and selling at a profit—constantly being at work so much of his time as to incapacitate him for his duty as teacher. I merely referred to this case because I think there is some misconception of what is meant by a mercantile pursuit as expressed in this clause.

The clause before mentioned and several others were agreed to.

The clause relating to vacation was read.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—Under the present law the vacations are two weeks each, but as an opinion prevails that this time is too short, blanks are left in this clause, so that hon. members might express their opinions on the subject. In other scholastic institutions, the vacations are longer, and when children have to spend a large portion of their time in agricultural pursuits, it may be a question whether it would not be advisable to extend the time to three weeks for each vacation.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—I believe it would be a decided improvement, to have the vacations three weeks in length each, as it would enable the pupils to assist in farm work during a very important period. The fact is, as a general rule, they do take three weeks each period, and that tends to lower the average attendance. I think a longer vacation would have a beneficial effect upon the teacher, he would be able to teach with greater vigor, if he had three weeks immunity from the like same duties of the school room.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL moved that the blanks in the clause be filled up so as to make the vacations from the tenth till the thirty-first of October in each year.

Mr. PROWSE.—I am not particularly anxious about this matter, but I have not heard any opinions in reference to the time being too short. The fact that higher schools have longer vacations is not a case in point, for in higher schools the children are away from home, and there are various reasons why they should be allowed to go home at certain times.

Mr. ARSENAULT.—I will support the amendment, for at certain seasons of the year there is not much benefit in keeping the school open, as only a very few scholars will attend. If a teacher faithfully performs his duty, and spends his time to the best advantage while he is engaged in teaching, I do not think the time proposed for the vacations will be too long.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—I do not think six weeks vacation in the year is too much for a man who has to perform the arduous duties of a school teacher. These periods of recreation are not found to have a pernicious effect, unless they are too extended. This matter has been thought of a good deal, and the Secretary of the Board, whose views should have considerable weight, has very strong opinions on this subject.

Clause agreed to.

The clause relating to assessments for books, school furniture, &c was read.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—This section puts the power in the hands of Trustees to assess up to five parents. A question arose some time ago, that if a person had an adopted child, should he not be liable to be assessed for books and school furniture, and I do not see any reason why he should not be. It may be said, in some cases persons have taken orphan children as an act of charity, and that it would be hardly fair to put any expense on a person who had performed such a charitable act, but if that child is sent to school, books and fuel have to be provided for his benefit, and the question is, should not the guardian of that child bear his share of the expense of providing such things. The next point is this, that although it is right that the parents of children should pay for fuel, and books that may be required at the present time, yet some hon. members think that desks and other furniture should be paid for by all the householders.

Hon. Mr. LAIRD.—The repairs of a school house may cost half as much as building a new one, and I do not see any justice in compelling all the resident householders to pay for the building of a new school house, and not applying the same rule in the case of repairs. As regards furniture, desks, &c. I think all the resident householders should help to pay for them also.

Mr. PROWSE.—I quite agree with the hon. member, in reference to the equity of assessing all the householders in a district for repairs and school furniture, for it is quite as likely to be beneficial to those who have no children of the proper age to send to school at the time the repairs are done, as those who have. For instance, a person may have a child fifteen years of age, and another may have two or three under five years of age, in case of repairing a school house, or providing furniture, the latter is likely to reap more benefit from it than the former, and therefore he has a perfect right to bear part of the expense.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—I believe, Sir, that no person who has the ability should be so scrupulous about paying for