

COLONIAL PARLIAMENT.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS IN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, MAY 2.

Hon. Mr. Howlan presented a petition from Augustine Calaghan and others, Merchants, and other inhabitants of Casumpec, praying for an amendment in the Small Debt Act.

Hon. Mr. Howlan, in presenting the above petition, explained that petitioners prayed for an amendment to the law relating to the recovery of Small Debts, by providing, in cases of appeal, that the Respondent as well as the Appellant should be required to give security for the costs of the appeal. It was alleged that cases frequently occurred where parties having unfounded claims went to law, anticipating that, rather than incur the costs of defence the defendant would compromise such claims. If characters of that class were compelled to give security, there would be less litigation in the Courts, he, therefore, hoped the prayer of the petition would receive the careful consideration of the House.

Ordered, that said petition be referred to a Committee of the whole House to-morrow.

Mr. Ramsay presented a petition from divers inhabitants of Lot 10 and 11, praying for the establishment of a new Post Office; the prayer of which could not be entertained as it had not been forwarded to the Government, according to Statute.

Hon. Attorney General presented to the House several petitions, all praying for the establishment of Small Debt Courts, as follows:—

Petition of M. Rowe and other inhabitants of Montague Bridge.

Patrick Doyle, and others, of South-west Settlements, Townships Nos. 26 and 27.

Thomas Caine, and other inhabitants of Georgetown Road, Baldwin's Road, Sparrow's Road, and the Barrons, King's County.

Ordered, that said petitions be referred to a Committee of the whole House to-morrow.

Hon. Leader of the Government presented to the House the Detailed Public Accounts for the past year.

Ordered, that the said Accounts be referred to the Special Committee appointed to examine the same, and report thereon.

On motion of the Hon. Attorney General, the House went into Committee to take into consideration the expediency of amending the law relating to Education. Mr. George Sinclair in the chair.

Hon. Leader of the Government presented to the House several petitions from School Teachers, setting forth numerous grievances with which they are oppressed under the existing Education Law, and praying the attention of the House to the defects of the said law, and for a remedy of such grievances.

Ordered, that said petitions be referred to the Committee of the whole House on the expediency of amending the Education Law.

Hon. Attorney General, in submitting the Resolutions, addressed the Committee, reviewing the principal clauses in the School Act which had not given general satisfaction. Owing to the lateness of the present session, it was not intended to enter fully into the whole question. The repeal of that clause in the Act touching the payment of a portion of the salary of Teachers by the people, was loudly called for, as contemplated by the Resolution now before the Committee. The estimated sum thus provided was about £4,000, which would, on the payment of the whole of the Teacher's salaries from the Treasury, be taken from the general revenue. That change, however, could not very materially effect the resources of the Colony for at least the first year. It was considered just and proper that young men, who had just received license to teach, should be engaged in the business for some time before being placed on a level with old Teachers. A reduction of £5 a year for the first three years in the salary of young Teachers, which with the fact that 5 months of the present financial year would expire before the Bill would be in operation, would leave the total additional sum that would be paid from the revenue at the end of this financial year £2,800, as the result of the change about to be introduced. There would, in all probability, be less money expended for military purposes this year than last. A revision of School Districts, in some cases, would lessen the number of Schools, without endangering the efficiency of the Act. He believed that the country would sustain the change without injury to the Revenue; but if not, they would, in his opinion, prefer an additional tax, rather than continue subject to the present mode of taxing themselves for the payment of Teachers. As a member of the Board for many years, and in the course of his profession, he saw many difficulties arising from the system of collecting a portion of the salary of Teachers by subscription. The most efficient and satisfactory method was that of paying the whole salary from the Treasury.

Hon. Leader of the Government—Not only the late but previous Governments had made alterations in the Free School Act, all of which failed to give satisfaction. He believed the object of the amendment compelling the people to contribute towards the payment of Teachers' salaries, was to relieve the revenue; but after the people had enjoyed the advantages of Free Schools, it was a difficult matter to attempt any change in the system. He then reviewed the general working of the Free School system, showing the disadvantages to Teachers, and the difficulties experienced by Trustees, as the result of the amendment now about to be abolished. He commended the principle of paying Teachers exclusively from the Treasury, as the best, most practical, and satisfactory that could be adopted.

Mr. Brecken would not admit that the principle upon which the amendment sought to be repealed was based, was wrong, although it had not worked satisfactory. If more stringent means were adopted for the collection of the amount necessary to be paid by the people, and the allowance from the Treasury withheld until ample proof of its collection was given, different results might have followed.

Hon. Mr. Henderson concurred with the remark made by the hon. leader of the Government, to the effect that it was hard to get the people to contribute towards the salary of the Teacher, after having it previously paid in full from the Treasury. His own experience, as a Trustee, afforded him ample proof of the correctness of that remark.

Mr. Howatt said he would support the Resolution under consideration; the amendment in question had proved a great failure. He alluded to an address of a late member of that House to his constituents, previous to the last general election, in which it was made to appear that the amendment, which had given such general dissatisfaction, would not have been adopted by the late Government had it not been for the support given to that measure by him (Mr. Howatt) and the Hon. Mr. Laird. Such, however, was not the fact.

Mr. Reilly—That portion of Teachers' salaries supposed to be contributed by the people, he believed was seldom paid. The Government allowance was all the Teachers generally received. He favoured the principle of placing young teachers in a subordinate position for a few years; it was but right that those who spent a great portion of their lives in the profession should receive some extra compensation. The general question presented many points deserving consideration. The Free School system in this Colony was superior to any that obtained in the other Colonies, and our young men compared favourably in point of talent and attainments with those of the sister Provinces, and even in the Great Republic they occupied positions of equality.

Hon. Mr. Duncan—The amendment respecting which so much had been said was introduced with the view of causing the people to take a greater and more direct interest in the education of their children. The principle upon which it was based was sound and was similar to that which prevailed in other places. There were more schools established in many localities than was neces-

sary. He would favor any measure calculated to perfect the School Act, and to encourage parents to educate their children.

Mr. P. Sinclair said that School Teachers, Road Commissioners, and country officials generally were poorly paid, he would not say that the same remark would apply to officials in Charlottetown. He would be glad if the salaries of Teachers could be raised but it appeared that the present state of the Revenue would not warrant any very material change, beyond that contemplated by the Resolutions before the Committee. The clause compelling Teachers to attest on oath to their quarterly returns, was too stringent and should be repealed.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition well remembered when in the year 1852, as a member of the House of Assembly, he was appointed one of the special Committee who agreed to the Report on which the Free Education Act was first founded, and from that day till the present he never regretted the support he then gave on that question to the hon. Mr. Coles as Leader of the Government of that day. Whatever differences of opinion might exist on other questions on the floor of that House, all should meet as patriots on the all important question of Education. He spoke of the advantages of education to all classes, and alluded to several eminent persons in the present day, who had acquired distinguished positions because of their learning, more than from any birth right inheritance. When the Education Act was altered in 1862, the then Government had no intention to cripple the system, but on the contrary to make it more effective by getting the people to contribute towards the payment of Teachers salaries, and thus lead them to attend more closely to the educational interests of their children. It appeared however that Teachers and parents thought differently, and hence the expediency of cancelling the amendment.

Hon. Mr. Davies said he was pleased to see that those who supported the obnoxious amendment, now about to be cancelled, had seen the evil of their ways. The principle of paying the Teachers direct from the Treasury was preferable to the difficult and impracticable mode of collecting a portion from the people, and paying the balance out of the Revenue of the Colony. The Free School system as at first enacted, extended the privileges of free Schools to all classes irrespective of rank or condition.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

House in Committee on the expediency of amending the law relating to Education.

Mr. Bell spoke of the inconvenience to Teachers, arising from their having to attest on oath to the average attendance at Schools. Much indifference was manifested by many of the people, especially in Back Settlements, touching the attendance of their children at School, hence the necessity of adopting, as far as practicable, a coercive system, in order to secure a more regular attendance at Schools. He commented on the great benefits arising from the Free School system, and said he was not disposed to find fault with the late Government for the amendment relative to the raising a portion of the salaries of Teachers by subscription, as the principle of direct taxation was, by some, contended to be the most equitable. The machinery for the collecting of Small Debts was very complicated, and having to refer to that process for the securing of a portion of Teachers' pay was indeed very disagreeable and vexatious. He would favor a different system for the inspection of Schools than that which now obtained. The establishment of subordinate Boards of Education in each of the three Counties of the Island, whose duties it should be to inspect the Schools, and report on all matters relating to Education in their respective sections of the country to a central Board at Charlottetown, would prove effective. He also alluded to the hardship of compelling Trustees to attend together before a Magistrate for the purpose of certifying to Teachers' papers.

Hon. Mr. Laird—On the principle that the state is bound to educate the people, the attendance at Schools should be compulsory. If a Government be compelled to pay for Education, parents should, on the same principle be compelled to send their children to School. That was a question with which, in his opinion, the Government, sooner or later, would have to grapple. He then enlarged on the necessity of educating all classes, irrespective of rank or condition. The application of machinery for lessening manual labor, in relation to agricultural and mechanical pursuits, was becoming universal, hence the necessity of educating the laboring classes, that, by well regulated and cultivated minds, they might be able properly to apply and appreciate those inventions and improvements calculated to improve their condition. Promotion by merit alone was the true principle, and the road to fame should be free to all. The gifts of nature were not confined to the sons of those in high rank. The child of the poor man frequently rose by his own merits to places of position and honor, to which, without education, he could never attain.

Mr. Cameron regretted that the lateness of the present Session would not permit of a more general revision of the School Act. There were several very objectionable clauses in that Act which should be repealed. Compelling Teachers to certify, on oath, to the correctness of their Journals, and also subjecting them to losses consequent upon the non-attendance of scholars, were matters which demanded serious consideration. Female Teachers should be paid in more equal proportion to Male Teachers than they had been. Their attendance at the Normal School, and the branches which they were required to teach were the same. The provisions of the law should therefore be more equally divided; but as it was not contemplated at present to enter fully into the question, he would not express the great pleasure it gave him to support the Resolution under consideration, having for its object the raising of Teachers from that degrading position in which they had been placed by the unjust and deservedly unpopular amendment of the late Government.

Hon. Mr. Henderson said that the principle acted upon in regard to Teachers attesting on oath to the correctness of their journals, also applied to Road Overseers and other salaried officers of the Government. It would be well to dispense with that system if the morality of the community would justify such a step. But if correctly informed, and that too from the records of the Board of Education, representations had been made to the Government that the law was evaded in regard to school attendance. Hence the adoption of that principle in the School Act. The principal object, relative to the amendment, for raising a portion of the Teachers' Salary by subscription, was to secure, if possible, the more direct interest of parents in the education of their children, as well as the relief of the Revenue, a large proportion of which had been spent in education. He was, however, prepared to admit that the amendment in question was unpopular, and he was prepared to give his support to the Resolution before the Committee.

Hon. Mr. Coles again explained the difference between the Free School System of this Island and the System which obtained in the Province of Nova Scotia. There Teachers were but partially paid by Government, and parents had to contribute in proportion to the number of their children attending school. Under the Free School System of this Colony, as at first introduced, and as the present Resolution contemplated, it should again be placed, paid the whole of the Teachers' salaries from the Treasury, thereby enabling the poor man to send all his children, regardless of number, to school. He hoped that system would be kept up in its integrity. The principle upon which it was based was sound, and had proven to be the best that could possibly be adopted. The agitation and discontent which arose from the unpopular amendment made by the late Government was proof of the efficiency of the Free School Act as at first enacted.

Mr. Brecken said he would support, not only the Resolution restoring to the Teachers the full payment of their salaries from the Treasury, but would even go further and support the raising of their salaries, Teach-

ers were but very inadequately paid for their services. Although he was free to admit that the principle of raising a portion of the Salaries of Teachers from the people had not given general satisfaction, yet he would contend that it was sound. Any boon conferred upon a community or an individual, without personal efforts or cost, was seldom, if ever, duly appreciated. The fact that the benefits of a Free System of Education were not prized by the people, was evinced by the non-attendance of children at schools. The immediate and no doubt unpleasant connection which was necessarily caused between Teachers, and unwilling rate payers, under the working of the amendment now sought to be abolished, was no doubt injurious to the interests of Education. He then commented upon the advantages of Education to all, in every walk of life, who, at the close of the labors of the day, could enjoy that recreation, during leisure hours, which was imparted to the mind by learning.

Dr. Jenkins—To impart to the youth of the Colony a sound practical education, and thereby prepare them to lay hold of the different pursuits of life, was the bounden duty of the Government. That higher object of moral and religious culture, calculated to make communities virtuous and honorable, also required careful consideration. If the Report which he held in his hand, of the Visitor of the Eastern Section of the country, was to form a standard, the state of Education must be at a very low ebb. That document was slovenly executed, and what the author termed a Tabular Synopsis of Statistics, was carelessly prepared; the spelling was bad, and the writing not legible. The money spent to procure such Reports as that might be appropriated to better purposes.

Mr. Prowse was glad to find that the Government had at last laid hold of the question of Education, which they should have done more fully than appeared from the Resolutions submitted. The want of interest taken in schools, under the Free System, was so great that it was with difficulty meetings for the appointment of Trustees, could be raised. That apathy and carelessness induced him to believe that the amendment, making it compulsory on the part of the people to contribute a portion of the Teacher's salary, would be productive of good results. It appeared, however, that to some extent, that experiment had proved a failure. Attesting to the correctness of School Journals on the part of Teachers, was, in his opinion, very proper, but he considered that rendering it imperative on Trustees to meet in presence of each other before a Magistrate, was uncalled for. Non-attendance at school, in many cases, was owing to want of proper clothing and other necessities, and the principle of adopting a compulsory system would require to be approached with great caution.

Mr. McNeill said that the amount required under the present Act, to be subscribed by the people, was, in many cases, made up by few. Had not the law, when the Free School System was first introduced, provided for the payment of the whole of the teachers' salary the case might be different; but after that, the people felt it a greater hardship than ever to have to contribute towards the teachers' pay. Many, especially in winter, are not able to send their children to school. He would not therefore support a compulsory system.

Mr. Arseneux—Teachers, holding licenses alike, was deserving of the same salary. Young men, just from the Normal School, having obtained license as Teachers from the Board of Education, were entitled to the same pay, and as competent to perform their duties as many old Teachers.

Hon. Mr. Laird would suffer no wrong impression to go abroad relative to his remarks on the question of Compulsory Education. That matter required to be carefully approached. The circumstances of those who might be unable to send their children to school would, doubtless, be considered.

Hon. Mr. Callbeck read from Statistics of Canadian Schools of Canada in 1859, and said that, in comparing the salaries of teachers in that country at that time with those of the teachers of this Island, he found they differed but very little. It was the duty of the State to educate the people. A large portion of the people could only afford to impart to their children the ordinary branches of a sound and practical English education. It was, therefore, the more necessary to give them every facility for the acquirement of that inestimable blessing. The mechanic and agriculturalist require a practical education, in order to enable them to take their places and contend for their rights in the various walks and pursuits of life. The parent who educates his child centers on him that which is more enduring than gold or silver. An eminent statesman said that work upon marble would perish; upon brass, time would efface; temples reared would crumble into dust; but work upon immortal mind would engrave that which would brighten to all eternity.

Hon. Mr. Howlan read extracts from a report of Schools in the State of Massachusetts, United States, showing the method pursued in that country. He recommended the gradation system, and said that four different classes would be preferable to two classes. That would give Teachers of high attainments advantages denied them under our present system. It would also open up a more general employment for Female teachers. He then proceeded to explain the principles by which the system called the Model system of Education in the States was conducted—as set forth in the report before him—and which he directed the attention of hon. Members. He contended for the principle of reward by merit, showing that some Teachers were better qualified for the profession than others, and should be rewarded proportionately. There were those who made teaching a business for life, others only used it as stepping stone to lead them to other employments. The question of Education was of the greatest importance, and demanded the best attention of every lover of his country.

The Chairman then reported that the Committee had come to three Resolutions. The same were then read from the Clerk's Table and are to the following effect, viz:

1st. That the salaries of the Teachers be paid in full out of the Treasury on the basis of the Salaries allowed by 26 Victoria, cap. 5, instead of partly by the Treasury and partly by the people. Teachers of each class, until they have taught for three years, shall receive Five pounds a year less Salary than those who have taught for upwards of that time.

2d. That the payment in full from the Treasury shall commence from the end of the now current quarter of this engagement.

3d. That the average attendance of Scholars shall be calculated at the end of each half year, instead of at the end of each quarter, as now required under the said Act.

The said Resolutions were severally agreed to, and a Committee appointed to prepare and present a bill in accordance therewith. Ordered that the Hon. Attorney General, Hon. Mr. Callbeck and Hon. Mr. Davies be the said Committee.

Mr. Prowse asked if the Government intended to make provision for a wharf for the landing of a Steamer at Murray Harbor. Hon. Leader of the Government replied that he feared, owing to the large sum that such a work would require, the question could hardly be entertained this Session.

Hon. Mr. Kelly, Chairman of the Committee to whom were referred petitions praying for the establishment of new Post Offices, presented to the House the report of said Committee, which report was ordered to be committed to a Committee of the whole House on Saturday next.

House adjourned.

FRIDAY, May 3.

House in Committee of Supply reported several Resolutions agreed to.

Hon. Attorney General, presented a bill to amend the Act relating to Land Assessment. Received and read, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.

Hon. Attorney General also presented a Bill in accordance with the Resolutions adopted by the Committee of the whole yesterday—to continue and amend certain Acts therein mentioned, relating to Educa-