

The Examiner.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND NEWS.

EDWARD WHELAN]

This is true Liberty, when free-born Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free.—EURIPIDES.

[EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

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Poetry.

PAPA, WHAT IS A NEWSPAPER? AND WHAT DOES IT CONTAIN?

Organs that gentlemen play, my boy,
To answer the taste of the day, my boy,
Whatever it be,
They hit on the key,
And pipe in full concert away, my boy.

News from all countries and climes, my boy,
Advertisements, essays and rhymes, my boy,
Mixed up with all sorts
Of (f) lying reports,
And published at regular times, my boy.

Articles able and wise, my boy,
At least in the editor's eyes, my boy,
And logic so grand
That few understand
To what in the world it applies, my boy.

Statistics, reflections, reviews, my boy,
Little scraps to instruct and amuse, my boy,
And lengthy debate
Upon matters of state,
For wise-headed folk to peruse, my boy.

The funds as they were and they are, my boy,
The quibbles and quirks of the bar, my boy,
And every week
A clever critique
On some rising theatrical star, my boy.

The age of Jupiter's moons, my boy,
The stealing of somebody's spoons, my boy,
The state of the crops
And the style of the fops,
And the wit of the public buffoons, my boy.

List of all physical ills, my boy,
Banished by somebody's pills, my boy,
Till you ask with surprise
Why any one dies,
Or what's the disorder that kills, my boy.

Who has got married to whom, my boy,
Who were out off in the bloom, my boy,
Who has had birth
On this sorrow-stained earth,
And who totters to the tomb, my boy.

The price of cattle and grain, my boy,
Directions to dig and to drain, my boy,
But 'twould take me too long
To tell you in song
A quarter of all they contain, my boy.

Colonial Legislature.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

FRIDAY, March 20.

AFTERNOON SITTING.

THE BIBLE QUESTION.

(Continued.)

Hon. T. H. HAVILAND.—I rise to explain. His statement that the clause which I have submitted will render the reading of the scriptures compulsory, is altogether wrong. It is no such thing as compulsory. It is if the parents or guardians of the children desire that the Scriptures shall be used. There is nothing compulsory in the matter whatever.

Hon. COL. SECRETARY.—I would like to ask the hon. member what is to be done in those schools where one half of the children are Catholics and the other half Protestants. What are they to do in a stormy day? are they to be turned out in the storm? They may as well read the Scriptures themselves as remain in the school while they are being read by others. Though Catholics are not opposed to the use of the Scriptures, yet they think they are not fit to be put into the hands of children, and that children are not capable of understanding them. They think it is better to keep them in the hands of the clergy than give them to every Tom, Dick, and Harry. We know that Teachers throughout the Island are of every denomination. Still, I would like to know what is to become of Catholic children in a stormy day, if attending a school in which the scriptures are used. They must either be deprived of instruction a portion of the day, or be turned out of doors, because, forsooth, they do not think proper to join in the reading of the Scriptures. If the Scriptures are forced into those schools where the children in attendance are partly Protestant and partly Catholic, then if there are only two Protestant children in attendance, the Scriptures must be read in the school. But, are the rest of the children attending such a school to sit and hear the Scriptures read, if they disagree with it? They may as well read them themselves. If the children attending a school were wholly Protestant, I do not think any one would oppose the reading of the Scriptures in it. It appears to be dreaded that the Board of Education may to-morrow rescind the resolution which they have now come to. That resolution is plain, stating that the Scriptures may be freely used in those schools where the parents or Trustees desire it. I believe that resolution will be the cause of introducing some ill feeling, if the majority of the people are of one or other of the denominations in question; for should the majority be Protestants, the Scriptures may be read in the school, and perhaps the Catholics may withdraw from it. I am glad, and I feel proud, that I am a little more liberal than to force religious instruction on any portion of children attending school, or to drive them out of school in stormy weather, or leave the school altogether. Now, I contend it is sufficient for the Legislature to legislate for the secular education of the youth of the Colony. There must be a little control over the schools left in the hands of the Board of Education. I speak my mind freely on this question, because I think it is right that it be put fairly before the country; and my opinion is that where the Legislature undertake to give education, they must confine it to secular instruction; and empower the Board of Education to settle disputes that may arise; because I contend if the Scriptures be read in mixed schools, quarrels will arise requiring the interference of the Board. Where religious instruction is imparted, it should be at the closing of the school, and the other portion of the day should be devoted to secular instruction. It is freely granted that there may be a religious lesson; and the Trustees have in their power to provide for that, when they engage their Teacher, but not to the detriment of the Roman Catholic portion of the community. That is the way in which the subject is managed in the Normal School. The

Board of Education made no arrangement about it; but the Teacher himself wrote to the Board, stating that he would, on the last day of the week, impart religious instruction to the children of those who desire it, those children to remain, for that purpose at the close of the other duties of the day. That is the way they accomplish it; we must yield a little in this mixed community. The Catholics, I believe, wish religious instruction as much as any, but they will not have the religious instruction of Protestants crammed-down their throats. When we make an Act on the subject, we must provide that no compulsion be used towards any party, which I think is the proper mode of settling the matter; but I think if we were to introduce a clause of this kind into the Act, it would distract the schools throughout the country. After all the agitation—and God knows there has been a great deal—the Catholics have not at least shown any strong feeling on the subject. Up to this time, Catholics and Protestants living together, have never used a hard word towards each other, but in attending school, go in and out as if they all belonged to one denomination, but perhaps on the Sabbath go different ways; and there has been no animosity at all. But there has been an attempt now made to raise religious feeling throughout the community. There has been religious feeling excited in other Provinces, but I would call upon them to keep it at home; and they have called upon Protestants to protect Protestant rights. They have troubles enough of their own, without endeavouring to introduce them here too. But Catholics and Protestants have lived long enough here, and have such friendly feelings among them, that they are not going to be disturbed for the sake of a little political popularity. [The hon. member here read a part of the conclusion of the proposed amendment.] That is the clause which is denied to be compulsory, yet, by the reading of it, it is decisive, at least for the Central Academy and Normal School. The hon. member for Princetown, (Hon. Mr. Haviland) has stated that this agitation has arisen from the Bible being excluded from the Normal School. It is true that the School Visitor, the Superintendent of that School took upon himself to say that the Scriptures should be read and expounded, but the Board of Education had at that time made no regulations at all respecting it. At their first meeting after that, they agreed what books should be used in it, and that they should be the same as those used in other Schools throughout the Island. Of course, they did not say the Bible should be a class book, and if not putting it in was excluding it, that might be done. But who was present at that meeting held on the 30th October? We find two gentlemen who seem to be very prominent now in the agitation against the exclusion of the Scriptures from the Schools—we find them present, and, sir, we find there was no division—that they all agreed to the rules of the Normal School that were laid before them. The Roman Catholic Bishop wrote his letter on the 7th November, more than a month after the Normal School was opened; and we heard nothing about the exclusion of the Bible from the School at that time. It was the Bishop's letter that seems to have raised them up to having the Bible in the schools. Why did they not come forward to the Executive Government and state they had been defeated in adopting proper regulations for the Normal School? But it was two months before we heard a word about it. Well, Sir, the Bishop's letter unfortunately was written under the apprehension that the Scriptures were to be read in the Normal School, and that, of course, they would be lectured upon the same as a parson from the pulpit, and, therefore, that it could not be for the benefit of the Teachers attending there to be taught a different system of teaching, if religious instruction was to be communicated in that way. He then wrote a letter asking if such were the facts of the case, and when he understood that the system of instruction was not to be carried out as Mr. Stark had stated, he was satisfied. I am sure, from his Lordship's letter, addressed to me, that he was afraid that the system of Education established in the Island would be disturbed; but when he learned that there was no intention to change the existing system, he was satisfied to let the subject drop. But there was a determination not to let it drop, and it has created a great excitement. I think, however, it is better to allay it. It is not only since the Free Education Act came into operation—when the subject was not interfered with—that the question of the reading of the Scriptures in the Schools was agitated. Some twelve or thirteen years ago, a resolution was proposed to make the reading of the Scriptures compulsory in our Schools, but it was not carried. If, then, with an experience of twelve or thirteen years, we find the present system answers well, we should not be moved by a little excitement. People will soon find that the Scriptures are not to be excluded from the Schools, and then they will be satisfied. But in a mixed population there must be a great deal of giving and taking, and we who are Protestants, ought not to say, because we are the majority, we will make the reading of the Scriptures compulsory in school. I think we ought rather to restrain ourselves in that respect, because we may come to be in the minority in a few days. I do not say that hon. members who support the amendment intend to enforce the reading of the Scriptures in school, but if the proposed clause be introduced, and if the Board of Education have to arbitrate in the matter, agitation may be raised which may be difficult to allay. There has been much said on this question which I might be expected to explain, but I do not wish to go into the matter at all; I wish to treat it calmly and coolly.

Mr. YEO had received no petitions from any place, relating to the subject under discussion, and understood that the Board of Education had come to a resolution that the Bible should be read in Schools wherever the parents of the children in attendance desired it. He had been in the Island a sufficient time to be acquainted with the matter, and in the part of the country where he resided about two-thirds of the people were Roman Catholics, yet he had never heard of any complaints on this question: the children took whatever books they pleased to school. There need be no difficulty respecting the reading of the Scriptures in mixed Schools; for if forty children were in attendance, twenty might read separately. If Protestant children took their New Testament to school, that would not be a cause of offence to the Catholic children. Allusion had been made to the Bishop's letter, but from his familiar acquaintance with that gentleman, he did not think he would be disposed to cause any disputes relating to the use of the Scriptures in school. It was to be regretted that excitement had been raised on the subject, but he did not see any harm in the amendment proposed by Hon. T. H. Haviland. Let children take whatever books they pleased to school, yet let not Catholic children be compelled to read the Scriptures; for if so compelled, the schools would be broken up in some places where there were disputes. Some of the Roman Catholic clergy wished very much that there was a division

made to every denomination of their own part of the education money, and he wished that could be done, as, if practicable, it would be the best plan. He thought the best system would be to allow the schools to be conducted as heretofore, and that children be permitted to take such books to school as they pleased, and to read the Scriptures where their parents desired it.

Mr. LAIRD had not much to say on the subject under discussion, but he did not see why some hon. members should be so much afraid of the amendment proposed by Hon. T. H. Haviland, for he saw it was much the same as the resolution adopted by the Board of Education on the subject. He did not know what was the reason that the Board came to that resolution at the close of their term of office. He had read a good many of the petitions, and the prayer of them was that the reading of the Scriptures might be permitted in school where desired. The amendment proposed might be strongly expressed in some places, still there was nothing compulsory in it. His hon. colleague (Hon. Col. Secretary) need not be so much alarmed at the proposed amendment, for it differed little from the resolution of the Board, which was now the law of the land, and he supposed that hon. gentleman had given it his sanction. All that was required then, was that the resolution of the Board be embodied in the Act, that the Scriptures be permitted to be read in school when desired. That, too, was the opinion of the majority of the people in his neighbourhood. Some of the Acadian French had called upon him desiring information on the subject, and he had explained to them that nothing compulsory was intended, which appeared to satisfy them. Some of the Irish Catholics had also spoken to him on the same subject, to whom he had given a similar explanation, and they had nothing to say against it. Nothing more was required in the law than more permission to read the Scriptures in school by those children whose parents or guardians desired it, and no compulsion at all. He would support the amendment proposed by Hon. T. H. Haviland, which, he thought, would give general satisfaction. Respecting the Board of Education, they were only servants of servants, they were dependent upon the Government and the Government were dependent upon the House of Assembly, which could dismiss them at pleasure. Since then, it was the members of the House of Assembly who had to say what was to be done in the matter, and that the resolution of the Board might also soon be repealed, he thought it was very proper that such an amendment as the one proposed should be inserted in the Education Law.

Mr. CLARK thought if the hon. member had read the amending clause, he would have seen a wide difference between it and the resolution of the Board of Education. That resolution permitted that the Scriptures might be read in the schools where the trustees and parents agreed to it; but the amendment proposed by Hon. T. H. Haviland went to say that they shall be read daily by those children whose parents or guardians desire it. Now, if the parents or guardians of children attending any school considered it necessary that they should read the Scriptures, and supposing the Teacher of that school were a Roman Catholic, that reading of the Scriptures would either drive him from the school, and the same would occur with a Protestant teacher, if obliged to teach the Douay version, or compel him, in either case, to teach what he did not believe; and there were many Catholic teachers in the Island. But the resolution of the Board was quite different; it said the reading of the Scriptures would be permitted where the parents desired it, and parties might have that understanding when a teacher was engaged. He could by no means support the proposed amendment to make the reading of the Scriptures in school compulsory, because it was against his principles to force religion into the schools where the parents did not wish it. They knew that the system of education in the Island was intended to impart secular education, and it was never contemplated to communicate religious instruction at all. He believed that no good whatever would arise out of the present agitation of the question, but that much harm would result from it; and he believed that where there was nothing about the reading of the Scriptures in schools before, there would be disputes and divisions now. He would vote against the amendment, and leave it entirely to the Board of Education to say what books should be used in the public schools, and he would never consent to the compulsory use of the Scriptures in them.

Hon. the SPEAKER.—Though I shall not occupy the time of the Committee on this question, yet to test the sincerity and liberality of the mover and supporters of the clause before the Committee, that is, to make a clause whatever it may be that may be considered as little obnoxious as it possibly can be made, I shall move that after the word "that," in the thirteenth line, the following be inserted: "both the Protestant and Douay versions of;" and that after the word "consider," in the eighteenth line, the words "that both the Protestant and Douay versions of;" be inserted. I shall move that amendment, in the first place, at the same time I do not wish to deceive the supporters of Hon. T. H. Haviland's amendment; because if my amendment be not carried, I intend then, after endeavoring to make the clause as perfect as I can, to vote against the whole of the amendment, as I consider that my alteration of the Act is wholly unnecessary.

Hon. T. H. HAVILAND.—I shall second it.

Hon. COL. TREASURER thought as some people believed the Koran and the Mormon Bible to be a Bible, if the House were going to introduce so many versions of the Scriptures into the schools, as was proposed, they had better stick them in too. He was decidedly opposed to the amendments, and would vote against them.

Mr. T. HEATH HAVILAND (amidst some confusion) said, the Hon. Col. Treasurer attempted to throw ridicule upon the subject by saying, if they introduced both versions of the Scriptures into the schools, they should have the Koran and Mormon Bible too. He considered it was throwing ridicule upon it to mention the word "Koran" upon that question, especially when it was a momentous and deep question, which was to be solved by them. But he thought the hon. member would have spoken in a different manner; for there was a greater difference between the Koran and the Scriptures than between the versions of the Catholics and Protestants. He considered Prince Edward Island to be a Christian country, and that in the great essentials of Christianity, all the inhabitants of it were agreed. [Dropping this point he continued.] This is a question, Mr. Chairman, that I consider every individual here should give his opinion upon before voting. The Hon. Col. Secretary says, that a great agitation has been got up out of doors to raise religious prejudice for political purposes; but if such has been the case, I am ignorant of it. I shall not give my vote for political purposes, but solely for religious purposes. I am of opinion,

and long have been, that secular education without religious instruction, does more harm than good; but at the same time, I would be very sorry to attempt to force the Bible or any other book into the hands of any individual of a different opinion from myself. All I want is equal religious rights, and as equal political rights. I would not tyrannise over Catholics; yet, I want to say this afternoon, that if we are in the majority, we ought to have such books used in school as we think proper. I wish to have my children taught what I please to dictate; and I consider that the education of my children will do them more harm than good, unless it is religious. I wish to have a clause in the Act providing for such instruction. Why, it is very strange, that the Government are not willing to have in the Act what the Board of Education agreed to; for it is now the law of the land. I fully agree with what the hon. member, Mr. Laird said, that we are here to say what should be done. We are the people's representatives, and let us take the responsibility; and now as we have the Act before us, let us put into it, that the children may read in school whatever books their parents wish them to read; but let none be used at the dictation of the Board of Education; for it is clear if they make a rule to day, they may undo it to-morrow. Then, too, this Act may continue five or six years longer before we can repeal it.

Hon. Mr. LORD.—I do not rise to support either the clause proposed or the amendment to it, nor do I intend to do so. When I look at the Education Act for the past three years, and see the harmony of its working, I cannot for a moment think of altering—either of adding to, or taking from, the old School Act. I am not bound up by my constituents, nor by those in the part of the country in which I was born; and I believe they are not so easily excited as some others on this subject. If the question is debated in the House of Assembly, and hon. members can show me the necessity for altering the Act, I do not refuse to alter it; but I am of the same opinion this evening as I formerly was, that I shall not support the compulsory reading of the Scriptures in the school; and in doing so, I believe I shall please both Catholics and Protestants. They want none of this agitation. I recollect some years ago there was nothing but wars, and rumors of wars; but I am happy to say that such things are now done away with, and Responsible Government has done it. The question at the hustings now is, not what is your religious belief, but what are your political principles. Why stir up all this agitation? I was astonished when I arrived at Halifax, and took up an Island newspaper, to see such a discussion got up in Prince Edward Island. All going on swimmingly—all becoming religious in a moment! I am not one of those who think much of sudden converts. I was astonished when I heard the School Visitor's report respecting the reading of the Scriptures in schools, that they were read in so few Protestant schools. Time indeed for reform; but why interfere with the subject now, when the system has wrought so well before? I shall oppose both the clause submitted by Hon. T. H. Haviland, and the amendment to it.

Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—The concluding remarks made by the last speaker, and by some others on the same subject, I shall perhaps be able to answer. You are aware that this order has been made by the Board of Education at a very late date. Many of the teachers were under the impression that the Scriptures were not to be read in school, which I know to be the case in the district in which I live. I asked the teacher why he did not use the Scriptures in school; and he was under the impression that he was not permitted to do so. This may account for the fact that many of the district schools in the country have not had the Scriptures in them. The Board of Education have now issued their order, and have there permitted that those children should be allowed to read the Scriptures in school whose parents or guardians desire it. Now, the clause proposed only follows out the views of the Board of Education; and that clause does not go to compel any person to read a version of the Scriptures which he does not wish to read; but it allows the Catholics to read their own versions, and the Protestants to do the same. I do not, then, see how any person can object to the clause before the Committee. To say it is a compulsory measure it is no such thing; it only says that the reading of the Scriptures shall be practised where desired.

Hon. COL. SECRETARY.—Who then is to be the judge what version is to be read. I know that the Speaker does not wish his amendment to be carried. Well, taking it for granted that his amendment is carried, what is the result? In a school where one-half of the children are Catholics and the other half Protestants, both versions must be read, which could never be carried out. With reference to what Hon. Mr. Montgomery said, that this resolution of the Board of Education is a new one, it is no such thing. The Visitor of Schools appears to understand, that the Scriptures may be used in school, when he says, the people take it for granted that the Scriptures are not forbidden. He goes on to say, "In my first inspection visit in 1853-4, I inquired in each school whether the Bible was used as a class-book, and received an affirmative answer in 63 schools out of 172 district schools then in existence." Now, what is the conclusion of this gentleman, who was brought out here, as many wish to make it appear, to give religious instruction? It is, that the books are so excellent, that they have taken the Bible from the schools. He says:—"Since then, the excellent series of school books has been introduced, and the proportion of those schools where the Bible is to be found has considerably diminished. The general impression in the country is, that the Free Education Act does not admit the Bible;" and then immediately, he says:—"While those who do use it, reason thus: that since the Bible is not expressly forbidden, it is tacitly permitted." I dare say when this question was agitated, they found out some of the schools not using the Scriptures, and that some of the teachers who do not like to hear the Scriptures read, made the excuse that the Bible was not on the list of books to be used in school. The Board of Education then thought it much better just to state what was their opinion as to the manner in which the schools should be conducted in reference to the reading of the Scriptures. The hon. member for Georgetown (Mr. T. H. Haviland) has stated, that he thinks secular education, without religious instruction with it, does more harm than good. Then, where has the hon. member been, since he was in the House of Assembly when the Education Act was passed? and if he thought such education did more harm than good, why did he not then offer to introduce a resolution in amendment of the Act? I believe the hon. mover of the amendment was one of the Trustees of the Central Academy at the time the Bible question was agitated formerly, and threatened to resign, because there was an attempt made to introduce the Bible into that institution. The hon. member for Georgetown (Mr. T. H. Haviland) says, we are now