

LP
F
5012

1877

L



3 9004 01389792 8

Queen's University
Library

KINGSTON, ONTARIO

F 5012
1877L

L E T T E R

OF

HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF TORONTO,

TO THE

RIGHT REV. BISHOPS OF ONTARIO,

ON THE

TORONTO SEPARATE SCHOOL QUESTION.

MOST REV. LORD,

For a long time we have been much grieved at the scandal which some members of the Toronto Separate School Board have caused, and which a certain newspaper spread through your Lordship's diocese. To do away, as far as possible, with this evil, which tended to lower in the estimation of your people the Episcopal and Sacerdotal character, we desire to lay before your Lordship a true history and statement of the Toronto Separate School question, which will completely vindicate both the honesty and honour of the Episcopal Corporation of Toronto and of the Clergy, who took so meritorious a part in establishing and maintaining the Separate Schools in this city.

Your Lordship well knows that one of the necessities of maintaining true faith amongst our people is the good Catholic education of the youth.—“Blessed is the man that hath borne the yoke of the Lord from his youth.” Secular education will make the children keen for the things of this world. Religious education will teach them the “one thing necessary” to make use of this world and of their own faculties to gain eternal rewards. Hence the Church at all times and in all countries, amidst persecution and social disabilities, made every sacrifice to have truly Catholic schools, where religion would predominate over, or at least keep abreast with, secular education, mingling with it, and guiding it with the unerring light of Faith and morality. No Christian parent can be recognized as such who will sacrifice the eternal happiness of his children to their advance in this life. Our ancestors in the faith, in Ireland especially, preferred a poor secular education, in schools behind hedges and in

lonely places, out of the reach of English spies and soldiers, to all the worldly advantages of a splendid education in the Protestant University of Trinity College, Dublin, to which honours and preferments were attached, but laden with heresy which kills the soul. Alas, that that ancestry so truly noble and religious should have descendants in this country erring from such illustrious examples, preferring for their children the goods of this world to the happiness of Heaven. Their children, when before the Judgment Seat of God, will not bless them.

When our illustrious predecessor, Monseigneur de Charbonel, came to Toronto there were no Catholic free schools in the city, and only one private school. He saw the want, and set about the remedy. The generality of the Catholic people of Toronto were poor, but the Church was rich in the noble self-sacrifice of her religious communities. The good Bishop brought Brothers of the Christian Schools from Montreal, and Sisters of St. Joseph from Philadelphia; provided them with residences, and erected schoolhouses. An outlay of several thousands of dollars was necessary for these purposes. The Hon. Mr. Elmsley, and a few Catholic gentlemen, nobly assisted the Bishop in the good work, and schools were established at St. Paul's, St. Mary's, on Stanley Street, (formerly a Baptist church), and in the old St. Patrick's school on Richmond street. The schools continued thus until 1855, when the Separate School Law came into operation. For four years after this date, the Bishop and Clergy, assisted in some degree by the people, sustained the schools.

During this period and for years afterwards,

the taxes and Government grant did not meet the expenditure, and thousands of dollars were paid by the Episcopal Corporation, and by the Clergy of the city, till 1873, when the schools became self-supporting, with a balance for building purposes; and then sprung up a host of friends, so called.

Exception has been taken to the expenditure of a small amount of school funds on the residences of Brothers and Sisters. A few words will put the matter in its true light. The salaries of the teachers were so low (\$60 a year for the Sisters, and \$120 for the Brothers) that they barely sufficed to procure them food and clothing—and these, too, of the plainest kind. Now it was a condition of the contract under which these religious bodies came to Toronto, that residences should be procured for them, and kept in repair, at the expense of the School Fund, as their salaries were so slender as not to meet their expenses. Yet a few unreasonable Trustees find fault with this most necessary and just outlay.

More than this, the Ladies of Loretto left their old Convent at St. Mary's to the School Board as a residence for the Sisters teaching school in that Parish. It was in such a dilapidated condition that extensive repairs were necessary to prevent the occupants dying of cold—and here, again, unfeeling men wildly declaim against the expense necessary to fit up the old house, for what was at best a miserable residence, giving people to understand that the Separate School funds were expended on simply conventual, instead of on school, purposes; though the the teaching Sisters had a *right* to a residence at the Board's expense, as we have said above. Had not the Sisters other means of support, it is patent except to the most unreasonable that \$60 a year would not have kept them in suitable food. We purposed about this time to add to the Separate School of St. Mary's an industrial school, but funds to carry out this design were never on hand.

The school houses of St. Mary's, St. Patrick's, St. Paul's, Bond Street, and Stanley Street were built originally quite independently of the Separate School funds, and unassisted by any Government or Municipal Grant, by the exertions of the Clergy and the liberality of the people in general, by concerts, bazaars, etc. The Episcopal Corporation granted land for those school-houses, yet some members of the Separate School Board, with marvellous insolence, claim all this property from the Episcopal Corporation, not only without a recompense but even adding unjust accusations. We hold Episcopal property for orphans, widows, and the poor in general, not for education alone. The Episcopal Corporation is eminently an ecclesiastical body, holding property for

the Catholic people, and their property is safer in the hands of the Archbishop than in the hands of a corporation whose members have no permanence, and some of whom lately proved to be unsafe for Catholic interests.

The Government many years ago gave some lands in the city of Toronto to the Protestant and Catholic congregations—what is called the Richmond street property was given to the Catholics—for Parochial School purposes. A school has always been kept upon the property, but as it was large, an orphan asylum was also established on it. Its value is enormously exaggerated for a purpose.

We found things thus on our arrival in Toronto. When the orphans left this building for the House of Providence, the Brothers moved to it, since by their agreement they were entitled to a residence. (The one they lived in was most miserable.) The building was repaired out of school funds by virtue of the same contract. When the Brothers removed to their own house, De La Salle Institute, they practically released the school funds from the burden of providing a residence for them, though they may claim the rent of a house. The Sisters of St. Joseph and of Our Lady of Loretto had also by this time their own convents, so that at present the care and expense of providing suitable houses for the Brothers and Sisters has ceased for the School Board. When the Brothers left their residence it was devoted to an institution in which young women of respectable character are boarded. Many of these young ladies attend Normal Schools, and others learn trades in the city. Now, as we before remarked, the property was large enough for schools besides, and none but the over critical and uncharitable would object to the presence of such an institution, for after all it serves for educational purposes.

\$108 a-year was received as rent for a corner store; this was spent in repairs of the schools, and helped to pay interest on moneys, for the last 25 years constantly borrowed by the Episcopal Corporation to meet school outlays. There were other small tenements on the lot. Some very poor people inhabited them and sometimes paid rent, we are told. They disappeared many years ago. It was used as a refuge for old women till they were sent to the House of Providence, and then torn down as useless, or rather a nuisance. We do not recall to have seen but one of them. Whatever rent was received from these places was more than spent by our venerable predecessor and myself on schools. If there could possibly be any claim, the land and school houses which the Episcopal Corporation gave, free of rent, so many years, have tenfold, and more, made up for it.

With the strictest economy the Separate Schools of Toronto were enabled to do their good work, thanks to the Religious Orders, and to the sacrifices of the Bishops and Priests. More than this, the Sisters of St. Joseph have, for the last fourteen years, given, for use as a school, their old convent, on Power street, in which 200 pupils are accommodated. They have a perfect right to rent for this building. The Sisters of Notre Dame, in Ottawa, are paid rent for the school accommodation which they give the children; and his Lordship, the Bishop of Ottawa, as well, is paid rent for the school-houses erected by him on his ecclesiastical property. Now had the Episcopal Corporation of Toronto followed this example it would have been impossible to have Separate Schools here. That the dependence of the Separate Schools on the support of the Episcopal Corporation might be made more manifest, the first act of the Separate School Board, composed of Catholic laymen, was to record in the minutes of their first meeting a vote to repudiate any personal obligation for any debts contracted, or outlay made for the Schools. The members could order improvements but were not liable for the debt contracted. Had the Bishop and Priests made a similar declaration, there had been an end to the Separate Schools of Toronto.

But the Church is equal to any emergency. As we have said above, the Bishop and Priests of the city advanced money and contracted debts for school-houses, sites, furniture, repairs, fuel, residences for teachers, &c. The entire revenues of the Schools including Government grants, could not cover the items of teaching and other necessary expenses. It was hard to bear, in the face of such a record, the scandalous imputation that the Episcopal Corporation and Clergy robbed the little Catholics of the city of their birthright of education. The aid of a part of the Protestant press (its respectable journals refused their cooperation) was solicited and obtained to scatter calumnies day after day, week after week; amongst the people against us. One paper in particular, which had some thousands of Catholic subscribers, persisted in these calumnies, notwithstanding that the proprietor of that journal, hitherto considered a friend to Catholic education, was frequently informed by a respected Clergyman of the evil he was effecting amongst weak Catholics, and especially amongst the youth. We considered it our sacred duty to warn the Clergy of the evil tendencies of this journal, and that such a paper could not be recommended to a Catholic people. This is also found fault with, but a manufacturer and vendor of poisons has no right to complain that his business is interfered with when a father warns his children against taking that man's drugs. When St. Paul was struck in the face, he said, "God

will strike thee thou whited wall." A stroke against the character of a Bishop or of his Clergy is yet a greater outrage. Nothing but sincere repentance and a retraction to the fullest extent of the many calumnies spread among thousands of persons, will save the calumniators, their aiders and abettors, from a stroke of God's judgment. To try to shake the confidence of a Catholic people in their Bishop and Clergy is to do the work of the father of lies. Unfortunately we have in Toronto a few nominal Catholics who, Judas-like, imitate, as far as they can, those wicked men who dethroned the Pope from his rightful patrimony and took the education of the youth of Italy into their unholy hands.

In 1862 Vicar-General Rooney was appointed Secretary-Treasurer of the Separate School Board, and Mgr. Jamot, the then Chancellor of the Diocese, undertook to assist him in his office. This disposition was one almost of necessity, from the constant need of the Chancellor's advancing moneys to pay salaries and to keep the schools in repair, to prevent a continued annoyance of deputations from the School Board requesting the loan of money. Your Lordship is aware that our spiritual duties engross all our time and that our trusted Chancellor has the management of all money matters and temporal concerns. These Reverend gentlemen were obliged also to spend a great deal of time and labor in examining year after year the tax lists to see that all Catholic taxes were levied and paid. The School accounts of receipts and expenditures for this period were rendered to the Board, approved year by year, and afterwards, according to law, published to the people at the election next ensuing.

We cannot imagine except it be hatred for the Church, that the Archbishop should be singled out by irreligious men as an object of their calumnies, as he was not on the School Board, or kept the accounts, or authorised disbursements, his only business was to give directions to his Chancellor to procure money for the School Board to carry on the Schools.

Whilst the Separate Schools had not funds sufficient for their maintenance, when the Episcopal Corporation and Priests had to supply the deficit, and the Religious Teachers to be content with half salaries, there was but little interest shown by a certain class of men in the affairs of the Separate School Board or in the education of the little ones, but no sooner was there money for improvements, and for school building, than a wonderful zeal sprang up. These men strove to get themselves elected; once on the Board they stamped and rudely exclaimed that it was all wrong in the past, ignoring altogether the great exertions and sacrifices of clergy and religious teachers. They invited reporters to attend the

meetings and then began a series of violent scenes, showing ill-breeding as well as irreligion, and bringing disgrace on the Catholic name. Calumnies and false accusations were freely thrown out against the ecclesiastical authority of the diocese. Then following up these false accusations a call was made for an Investigating Committee to examine the accounts for the last fifteen years! It would not answer their unholy purpose to go back for twenty-five years to the infancy of the schools, the record would be too honourable to the Bishop and Clergy. This was an insult to all past Boards as well, for the accounts were regularly submitted and passed by the Board year after year. This Committee of Investigation protracted its sittings for six months, and then submitted a report in which a sum of \$2,730 was shown to have been expended by the Episcopal Corporation and Parish Priests of the city over the ordinary revenues of the schools. No mention, of course, was made of sums expended by the clergy or Bishop before these fifteen years, in the infancy of the schools. The report was adopted with but one dissenting voice. The report was so long in coming that we judged it necessary to hold a general meeting of the Catholic citizens of Toronto, and Mgr. Jamot who was then in the city, laid before them all the accounts which were in his hands during the fifteen years. The meeting unanimously approved of the past management, and expressed itself indignant at the calumnies of the refractory members of the Board, and yet after these proceedings, the evil disposed proprietor of the journal spoken of above, continued the evil work, and published an article based on facts wrested from their true meaning, still endeavouring to sow seeds of discord and disaffection amongst the people. Mons. r. Jamot submitted his account in two ways, from January to January, and from September to September, one way it would tally with the Government account, the other would not. A cooked and falsified report was published in one of the city journals based on false issues. Dates were even perverted as well as figures to serve their ends. Some of the poor trustees were heard to say, after being elected, that they hoped in three years they would finish the Separate Schools in Toronto, as they were not needed. They took the best plan for this end, first to belittle the education given, and the qualification of the teachers, and then to accuse the Episcopal Corporation of misappropriating the funds of the schools. Hon. Mr. Crooks, Minister of Education, together with the Mayor of the city, some aldermen and gentlemen of the press, visited the schools with ourselves and some of the Trustees; the evil disposed did not put in an appearance fearing likely that the result of the examination of the pupils might cause them to blush

for their evil reports of the schools in the presence of such honourable testimony; the pupils were examined, and the Hon. Minister of Education gave his unqualified testimony to the efficiency of the schools. The Brothers and Sisters have their own Normal schools to prepare them for teaching. Many of the Brothers and Sisters also had first and second class certificates from the secular Normal Schools.

The qualifications of the Christian Brothers, and of the ladies of the different Sisterhoods teaching in Ontario, have been called into question by our enemies. Let them read the following on Roman Catholic Separate School Teachers' Certificate of qualification, Roman Catholic Separate School Act, 1863, Article XIII:—

“The teachers of the Separate School under this Act shall be subject to the same examinations, and receive their certificate of qualification in the same manner, as Common School Teachers generally; *Provided* that persons qualified by law as teachers, either in Upper or Lower Canada, shall be considered qualified teachers for the purposes of this Act.”

And this from the Consolidated Statutes, Quebec (1861), Chap. 15, Sec. 110, No. 10, page 97:—

“Every Priest, Minister, Ecclesiastic, or person, forming part of a Religious Community, shall be in every case exempt from undergoing an examination before any of the said Boards” (referring to the Public School Boards).

From these clauses of the Separate School Act of 1863, and of the Consolidated Statutes of 1861, we see that the Christian Brothers and the members of the teaching Sisterhoods in Ontario are qualified as teachers by the Legislature, which is the highest tribunal in the land.

Those miserable trustees also complained of the presence of so many priests on the School Board. We have said above, that few laymen of education and position could be found to devote their time to school affairs; they left the care and burden of them to the priests. The presence of the priests, from their position in the Church, as guardians of Catholic Education, and also by their own education and disinterestedness, was a necessity on the Board, and latterly of the utmost importance to keep the school funds from being squandered on jobs, for friends. One example alone will suffice to prove this. Vicar-General Rooney acted as Secretary-Treasurer, kept the books faithfully and honestly for sixteen years without pay or recompense, to save the money for salaries of half-paid teachers; but soon a friend had to be assisted, and a sum of \$250 per annum was voted for an Assistant Secretary. This

sum, for a few hours' work in the fortnight, is more than a Brother receives for teaching every day in the week. The Brothers and Sisters, assisted by their pupils, saved the wages of care-takers for many years. We do not object to reasonable salaries paid for this office; but jobs and want of economy will detract from the most necessary stimulant, a good fair salary to teachers. We do not think it is fair or honourable to refuse teachers of Religious Orders a suitable salary for good work, and to pay four times the salary to secular teachers of the same capacity for the same work. The workman is worthy of his hire, though he be a member of a Religious Order. These foolish men got up the cry of priests' party and people's party, as if the priests were against the people. The priests certainly take more interest in the Christian education of the children of their congregation than a layman will of his neighbour's children. Priests' party is the cry of the infidels of Italy and France, who are against the rights of the Catholic people and Church. Does such a cry sound well in the mouth of a Trustee of Catholic Schools? A true Catholic should esteem his Church and its teachings above all things. It is no great pleasure for priests to sit at the same Board with such men; they would gladly resign their position to true Catholic gentlemen, who would give their time to the good work. At present, laymen are in the majority on the Board.

St. Peter's School has also been the occasion of very unjust attacks on the part of those religious Trustees. A school house was needed near Seaton Village, nearly two miles north of St. Mary's School. There was a goodly number of Catholic children too far away, and too young to go to it. Vicar-General Rooney, in his zeal for the future as well as for the present, determined to establish a separate School there, and thinking that a church would in time be wanted in that locality, purchased a large lot on which, besides a school, a church would be built hereafter. Hence the school house was located on the corner of the lot, and a recess built behind the school with folding doors for an altar for Sundays when necessary. This recess was blessed with a short ceremony. The altar was used twice in three years. For this school building \$500 only were voted from the Separate School funds, when it should be the duty of the School Board to procure the land, and build the school and finish it. Now, because Vicar-General Rooney did both, some trustees have persisted in accusing the Separate School board of donating unjustly \$500 towards building St. Peter's Church. Could your Lordship recognise any mark of Catholicity about such men to qualify them to be the guardians of the

Catholic education of the children of pious parents. The truth is, Father Rooney built a Separate School and outhouses, and fenced all, which cost about \$2,000 independent of the land. The people of St. Mary's helped him about \$430. The true state of the case is that the Vicar-General could return the \$500 to the Board, and charge rent of about \$150 a year for the use of the school, so that the \$500 are already nearly expended in three years' rent. The School Board has been also blamed for granting bonuses to the Sisters or, rather the Episcopal Corporation which has nothing whatever to do in the matter. Let us examine the facts. When the salaries of the Brothers and Sisters were fixed at the low figures quoted above, it was with the understanding, that when the financial condition of the schools improved an advance should be made on the salaries. This promise was allowed for years to be unfulfilled, and when at last the Separate School Trustees found themselves possessed of means, they, in payment of a just debt, granted to the still poorly paid sisters, two bonuses of in all \$928.25, not yet a third of what was due them. A bonus of \$525.25 (included in the above amount,) was voted by the Board to the Sisters of Charity, of St. Mary's School. These Sisters had come from the United States, and were recalled by their Superior there, because the salaries allowed them were not only insufficient for their support, but left them heavily in debt for provisions. The Sisters could not leave the city with those debts unpaid. The School Board therefore gave them that bonus, which should in all justice be charged to salaries. The Sisters of St. Joseph were in the same condition, the mother-house largely supporting them, from the proceeds of their boarding and day schools. This bonus also should be placed to the account of salaries. We may remark here that the Brothers of the Christian Schools, are largely indebted to the mother-house of Montreal for similar support.

Exception has been taken also to an item in this report of \$209.12 voted by the School Board for musical instruments and tuition, but this was refunded over and over again in the item of \$962.90 of tuition fees received from the Christian Brothers Academy.

But to have a true idea of the favors procured by the Religious Orders in the cause of education, we may be permitted to compare the expenses of salaries to Brothers and Sisters with that which must have been incurred had lay teachers of the same capacity been employed. The year just elapsed, 1877, saw 16 Brothers and 21 Sisters in the employ of the Separate School Board. The salary received by the Brothers (and this only for last year) was \$200 a year each; that of the Sis-

ters for many years also was only \$60, then \$100; and this year \$150 is promised. Now the average salary of laymen of this city of the same capacity with the Christian Brothers is proven by Public School documents to average \$812—some receiving as high as \$1,000, others \$800 and \$900; that of female teachers would average \$360, receiving from \$600 to \$300 each. Were we then obliged to pay such figures our account for salaries alone would stand thus:

16 male teachers at \$600 a year, (\$212 lower than the average, \$150 below the minimum).....	\$9,600
21 female teachers at \$360 a year (the average).....	7,560
Total	\$17,160

or twice the entire revenue of the Separate Schools for 1877-78. Our being obliged to pay merely the small salaries now demanded changes the figures to the following:

16 Brothers at \$200.....	\$3,200
21 Sisters at \$150.....	3,150
Total	\$6,350

which is the sum charged to salaries in Report of 1877. Difference in favour of the Religious Orders of nearly \$11,000 a year on salaries alone.

Again, had we an official staff proportioned to our attendance and salaried as the Public Schools' officers, an additional item of about \$4,000 would be yearly added to our expenditure. The place of such a staff is supplied by the priests and religious of the city. Your Lordship sees again that without the aid of the religious orders Separate Schools would be an impossibility in Toronto.

In evidence of the results produced under the present management of the schools, we may be allowed to instance the *per capita* cost of education in our schools. For 1877 it was \$3.07, whilst that of the Public Schools was \$11.07, for the same year; yet Hon. Mr. Crooks testified to the efficiency of our schools supported on such a modest outlay. No wonder enemies of the Catholic Church, both within and without, are disgusted with such a system, and exert themselves against it.

Again, had rent been charged by the Episcopal Corporation as is done in Ottawa, Halifax, and elsewhere, for the buildings now in use

as schools, something like the following would have been reached.

St. Patrick's School....	\$200 a year
St. Mary's "....	200 "
Bond Street "....	150 "
Power Street (formerly a Convent).....	200 "
St. Paul's.....	200 "
Stanley street (for ten years).....	150 "
Total	\$1,100 a year

for six schools, in use, some twenty years more or less, all, on an average, fifteen years by the Separate School Board. Altogether item of \$16,500, due by the Separate School Board to the Episcopal Corporation. The Corporation possesses its land and property not for educational purposes alone, but for the widows and the orphans, the aged and the infirm, as were remarked before. Bishops and Priests are the best friends of the people, and interested themselves more than lay trustees in the education of the children of their congregations. The Separate School Board, if it be Catholic as the law of the land supposes, should not be in opposition to the Episcopal Corporation. If it be, it is evident to every Catholic that the Board is in the wrong. In the calumnies against the Episcopal Corporation and Clergy been confined to Toronto, we would not have noticed them so much, as good people of Toronto could not be so easily duped by lying reports; but being circulated in your Lordship's Diocese through the medium of that journal we fear that some of your people may have been scandalized by them. It was with good reason that our Holy Church put into the mouths of her Priests every morning at the foot of the altar, "Judge O God, and discern my cause from the holy nation. From the unjust and deceitful man deliver me." The most holy and best things are vilified and calumniated. Were these charges made against us true, would a good Catholic charge his Bishop before sneering unchristian world with misdeeds which could be otherwise corrected. A good child never tries to bring on his parent a disgrace which will cause him to be despised. The disgrace of the father is the dishonour of the child. We must expect to share in the chalice of our Divine Lord Himself. We shall try to imitate His most holy precepts and pray for those that persecute and calumniate us.

We have the honor to be,

Your Lordship's humble servant and brother in Christ,

+ JOHN JOSEPH LYNCH,

Archbishop of Toronto



