

2000

THE SEPARATE SCHOOLS ACT.

Facts for the Electors.

MOWAT OPPOSED SEPARATE SCHOOLS

The Conservatives Passed the Act.

The separate school law was passed in 1863 and made part of the constitution by the confederation act and cannot now be altered except by the Dominion and imperial parliaments. All the leading reformers voted against it and not one for it. All the leading Tories voted for it. And it was passed by a vote of 78 to 30.

*Tories—Voted
for.*

SIR JOHN A. MAC-
DONALD.
A. P. CARON.
G. E. CAPIER.
LANGEVIN.
RYKERT.
SIR JOHN ROSE.
CARLING.
TASCHEREAU.

*Reformers—Voted
against.*

OLIVER MOWAT.
GEORGE BROWN.
ALEX. MACKENZIE
BIGGAR.
HARCOURT.
MCKELLAR.
and others.

And yet they have the impudence to say the reformers are responsible for separate schools.

THE AMENDMENTS.

First amendment, 1877, provided that the assessor should put on roll whether supporter of public and separate schools and provided for appeal to court of revision instead of the clerk having to do it, and no appeal from any mistakes he might make.

Was that not a fair and proper amendment? How did it help Catholics? Was it not right to have appeals provided for?

The second amendment, 1879, provided that the assessor should accept the statement that a ratepayer was a Roman Catholic as prima facie evidence that he was a separate school supporter. This did

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not and was not intended to relieve them from giving the statutory notice that they wished to be separate school supporters, and the court so decided after full argument by counsel on both sides and not on a one-sided statement of the case, like the tories at Ottawa submitted to the law officers in England on the Jesuit question.

Read the court's answer to third question:

Is or is not the assessor bound to accept the statement of, or made on behalf of, any ratepayer under section 120 (2) of the public schools act, in case he is made aware or ascertains before completing his roll that such ratepayer is not a Roman Catholic or has not given the notice required by section 40 of the separate schools act, or is for any reason not entitled to exemption from public school rates.

And this court in answer to third question doth declare that—

The assessor is not bound to accept this statement of, or made on behalf of, any ratepayer under section 120 (2) of the public schools act, in case he is made aware or ascertains before completing his roll that such ratepayer is not a Roman Catholic or has not given the notice required by section 40 of the separate schools act, or is for any reason not entitled to exemption from public school rates

Now, what were Meredith and his friends doing at that time? The tory member for East Peterboro moved an amendment to the bill providing that every Roman Catholic should be deemed *ipso facto* a separate school supporter, and that notice in writing should be required to be given by a Roman Catholic ratepayer before school taxes levied upon his property should be applied in aid of the public schools.

This was opposed by Hon. C. F. Fraser, the Liberal Catholic member of the government, on the ground that it would make separate schools compulsory, and he would not vote for or support anything, even if it would benefit his co-religionists, if it was not right. He said:

"He desired that nothing should appear in the act which might be claimed unconstitutional. The fundamental principle of the separate school was that it was permissive."

Mr. White, one of Meredith's chief lieutenants, replied to Mr. Fraser and pitched into him for not supporting the member for East Peterboro.

"Mr. Crooks (who was the minister of education at the time) said this would elevate the separate school system into a rival of the public schools. The British North America act provided that existing privileges of separate school supporters should be continued, but this amendment would make the separate school compulsory. The principle of separate schools," Mr. Crooks continued, "whether Protestant or Catholic, was simply permissive, and he was not prepared to go so far as to guarantee any support to them. His (Dr. Sullivan's) contention was that not only should every Roman Catholic be regarded as a separate school supporter, but he should not be regarded as a public school supporter unless he gave notice. He (Mr. Crooks) was only in favor of an alteration of the law so far as the change was required by public necessity. All he (Mr. Crooks) assumed to do was to provide that the assessor should do his duty."

And yet this is the amendment which you hear so much about, which even were it wrong the tories tried to make it worse.

Third amendment, 1881. This is known as the landlord and tenant amendment and was passed for the following reasons: Sometimes there was a Catholic landlord and Protestant tenant and vice versa, and there was nothing in the act to say which should decide who should pay the taxes. Now, in Lindsay the separate school taxes were much less than public school taxes, and it was found that Mr. Keenan and other large Catholic landlords were having their properties assessed to them instead of the tenants, so that separate schools should get the taxes. Mr. Grace, chairman of the public school board, objected to this and represented the matter to the government, who at once passed this amendment, declaring that as it was the tenant's children who were educated and the tenant who really paid the taxes, because if the landlord paid the taxes the tenant simply paid so much more rent—that the tenant should decide which school he should support and Protestant tenants were thereby prevented from paying their taxes to separate schools because they were less. There were twenty cases of this kind in Lindsay and the separate school lost the taxes on over \$80,000 worth of property by this amendment.

Was this not right and fair, and the public schools were benefitted. Yet this is what Meredith would have you go back to.

Fourth amendment, 1885. This is known as high school trustee amendment. Although there are separate public schools there are no separate high schools, and Catholics as well as Protestants have to support them. Now, this act simply provides that separate school boards can appoint one trustee out of seven. Is that not fair? But they say let the town councils or county councils appoint one, but they did not do it and for a very good reason. Where there are high schools, as in Lindsay, there is a union board of high and public schools, and they jointly manage both. Now, if a Catholic was appointed by town or county councils he could vote upon public school matters. Electors, do you approve of it? The act passed by Mr. Mowat expressly provides that the high school trustee appointed by separate school trustees shall not vote on public school questions. Is that not right?

INSPECTORS.

The conservative platform is that public school inspectors should inspect separate schools. If you admit this, and are willing to give fair play, there should be some Catholic inspectors, as they would be inspectors of public and separate schools. Now, how would you like to have a Catholic inspecting public schools? Reformers say emphatically "No." They have their separate schools, we cannot prevent that, but let them keep to themselves. We will not consent to their interfering with public schools. Then they say it is not fair that the separate school

inspectors should be paid by the province out of general funds. Are not public school inspectors paid out of general funds? There are two in Victoria appointed by county council and paid out of general funds contributed by Catholic and Protestants alike, and these inspect all the public schools in the county. Now there is only one separate school in the county, and the counties could not therefore appoint inspectors, and the province appoints an inspector to inspect all separate schools in the province. Is not that fair?

BALLOT ACT.

In 1882 when an Orange member moved to have ballot in both public and separate schools, Meredith spoke and this is his speech:

"Mr. Meredith said at the time the Roman Catholics were asking for separate schools it was the conservative party who supported them in their claim, and obtained from them, at the risk of loss of seats and influence, their now recognised rights. It ill became the commissioner to accuse the hon. member of West Toronto of being hostile to the separate school system, and to attempt to make out that this alleged feeling was shared by the conservative party. It was the leader of the government who had been hostile to it, and had voted against the concession of the right to have separate schools. While he recognized the right of the Catholics to have separate schools, he did not see why no attempt should be made to improve the system. The commissioner said that the bill must be rejected because of the speech of the mover. According to him, a bill was to be rejected, not on its merits, but according to the speech delivered by the mover. He knew nothing of the state of separate schools in Toronto, but so far as London was concerned he believed they were well conducted. He did not favor forcing the ballot system upon the separate school supporters if they did not want it, but he supported the proposition to extend the ballot to the public school elections."

This is his speech as reported in the Mail, which was then the tory organ. This was the time he was trying to catch the Catholic vote. Sir John Macdonald had just won the Dominion elections by pandering to Lower Canadian Catholics, and Meredith thought he could do the same, to wit, see "Facts for Irish electors," which Mr. Kerwin, who was paid for writing it, swears was approved of by Mr. Meredith, and his speech shews he agrees with it. Now there is not compulsory ballot in public schools, and why should it be forced on them if they don't want it. If they or some of them want it and can't get it, and think they have a grievance, let them resent their own grievances; it does not concern Protestants. But do the people want it? The best answer to this is that the public schools in the townships have not adopted it; and why, because it would be expensive and troublesome for small school sections to go to the trouble of having ballots printed, with all the expense attending a municipal election. But if any Catholic elector has a grievance, and objects to the way the separate schools are run, he has a very simple remedy by refusing to become a separate school supporter, or giving notice that he discontinues if he is one.

THE HIERARCHY.

The conservatives pretend to be righteously indignant at the hierarchy as they say interfere with the management of the separate schools. The reformers object just as much but there is no power to interfere, and Mr. Meredith does not pretend that he can prevent it. The matter is part of their religion, and the Ontario government cannot interfere with it any more than they can with other doctrines of the Catholic church which they object to. Mr. Meredith said at Lindsay that the same thing occurred in New Jersey, and that they at once proposed to make it a highly penal offence to refuse sacraments or rites of the church to any person refusing to support separate schools. Now that is a matter relating to crime, and criminal law is a matter within jurisdiction of the Dominion government, and if the conservatives are sincere in the matter why don't they bring in and pass such an act where they have the power; but they are not sincere, and bring in buncombe resolutions in a house where they have no such power, simply to stir up religious cries.

TEACHERS.

The conservatives say: "Make the teachers in separate schools pass the same examinations as public school teachers." It cannot be done, and they know it. The original separate school act passed by them and guaranteed by the confederation act, provides: "That persons qualified by law as teachers in Upper or Lower Canada shall be considered qualified teachers under this act." This permits nuns to teach, and was so intended by the Tories when they passed the act. All that could be done by Mr. Mowat has been done.

RACE AND RELIGIOUS CRIES.

The above completely answers the base, cowardly religious cries, raised by the opposition. Read what Principal Caven, the chairman of the Equal Rights Association, says in the Mail on 12th May, 1890:—"I must repeat what I said in a letter, 'which you were kind enough to publish on 30th April, that all attempts to make party capital out of the separate school question are either ignorant or dishonest, and will be discountenanced by every fair minded man who knows a little of Canadian history. I desire therefore to say, I speak for myself, that the measures adopted in regard to French schools appear to be satisfactory, as does the legislation of last session respecting separate school supporters.'"

Electors, what do you think of it? Can you trust Meredith and the conservatives with such a record. Look at the record of Mowat's honest government for the past 18 years, against which no charges of corruption can be made. Look at his management of the finances and the surplus he has, and then look at Quebec's debt of \$25,000,000 and the Dominion debt of nearly \$250,000,000, and do not allow yourself to be influenced by false cries, but give the "grand old man" a rousing victory.

The EDITH *and* LORNE PIERCE
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