

ON SOME POINTS
IN THE
HISTORY & PROSPECTS
OF
PROTESTANT EDUCATION
IN
LOWER CANADA.

A LECTURE, DELIVERED BY PRINCIPAL DAWSON, BEFORE THE
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PREFATORY NOTE.

The writer of the following lecture desires it to be understood that his object has been merely to introduce the great questions of which it treats, to the attention of those who may not previously have considered them. In attempting to compress even the elements of the subject within the limits of a lecture, it has proved necessary to omit many important topics, and merely to mention others which might profitably have been treated in detail, and illustrated by documentary and other evidence.

The lecture is published by request of the large and respectable audience before which it was delivered.

HISTORY AND PROSPECTS OF PROTESTANT EDUCATION IN LOWER CANADA.

It is natural that a lecturer should select a topic with which his own thoughts have been much occupied, and which may at the same time be supposed likely to interest his audience. For this reason I make no apology for inviting your attention to a subject which seems to me of special importance in the present crisis, and in which all of us are in some degree interested. In doing so, I shall first briefly sketch the leading features in the history of British education in Lower Canada, and then refer to the measures which its present position seems to demand. I wish it to be distinctly understood that in treating of this subject I do not speak in any official capacity, or as the representative of any body of men; but simply as the exponent of my own views in relation to a cause on which I have spent nine of the best years of my life, and which I have learned to regard as of the utmost importance to the welfare, not of Lower Canada merely, but of British America. The historical facts which I shall state have been derived in part from documents and publications of the Royal Institution, and in part from the Reports of the Department of Education.

The first movement on behalf of public education in Lower Canada, after the conquest, appears to have been made by Lord Dorchester, Governor of Quebec, in 1787. He appointed a committee of council to collect information on the subject of education, and to report on "the best mode of remedying the defects, an estimate of the expense, and by what means it may be defrayed." The committee seem to have entered into the subject with earnestness and zeal. From the answers to questions which they prepared, it appears that the provision for the education of the French population consisted of the Seminaries of Quebec and Montreal, certain convents, and some Canadian masters who taught reading and writing; and the Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec, in answer to a question on the subject, stated that on the average there were in each parish 20 or 30 persons, principally women, who could read and write. Of English Education we find at this time only the mention of schools

at Quebec, Three Rivers and Montreal, apparently not receiving any provincial aid.

The Roman Catholic schools at this period seem to have been supported by their endowments and by fees. The Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec, in a long and elaborate answer to the enquiries of the committee, objects to non-denominational education, claims for himself and coadjutor a "distinguished station" in any collegiate institute which might be established, and seems to think the only measure required to be the restitution to the Roman Catholic Church of the Jesuits' estates for educational uses. It is stated in the article on Education in Lower Canada, in Lovell's Almanack for 1864, that the coadjutor Bishop supported the scheme of the Government; but I have not seen his answer to the questions proposed.

The committee, however, had apparently been studying the educational laws already in existence in the New England States; and accordingly, in an able report, recommend a school system and a university. They say:—

"It is expedient without delay to erect Parish or Village Free Schools in every district of the Province, under the regulation of the Magistrates of the district in the Quarter Sessions of the peace."

"It is also expedient that each District have a Free School in the central or County Town of the District."

"It is expedient to erect a Collegiate Institute for cultivating the liberal arts and sciences usually taught in the European Universities, Theology excepted, on account of the mixture of the two communions, whose joint aid is desirable in so far as they agree, and who ought to be left to find a separate provision for the candidates for the ministry of their respective churches."

I quote this because it shows that, from the very first, the English colonists desired to erect a public school and university system, as distinguished from the purely sectarian and ecclesiastical methods advocated by the religious leaders of the French inhabitants. It is also apparent that the committee of Council had conceived the idea of a public incorporated unsectarian body, to manage a homogeneous system including the three grades of Collegiate, High School and Common School Education, and to hold for this purpose grants of public land and private benefactions. They show also a strong desire to meet the views of the Roman Catholic clergy, by avoiding all interference

with their seminaries or schools, or the religious education of their people, and by permitting them to educate their own people in separate schools.

Had this wise scheme been carried into effect immediately and with vigor, the whole future history of Lower Canada might have been very different, not only educationally but politically; and a great impulse would have been given to the industrial progress of the people. Unhappily it was allowed to remain inoperative, and Canada acquired representative institutions before it had a system of education.

The next educational movement in Lower Canada was also British in its origin. It consisted of a petition signed principally by the British inhabitants of Quebec and its vicinity, presented to the first Parliament of Canada in 1792. Its principal object was to obtain a grant of the Jesuits' estates for educational purposes. The Assembly voted an address on the subject, but no answer seems to have been obtained until 1801, when the Lieutenant-Governor communicated to the Assembly His Majesty's instructions in the following terms:—

“With great satisfaction I have to inform you that His Majesty, from his paternal regard for the welfare and prosperity of his subjects in this Colony, has been graciously pleased to give directions for the establishing of a competent number of Free Schools for the instruction of their children in the first rudiments of useful learning and in the English tongue, and also as occasion may require, for foundations of a more enlarged and comprehensive nature; and His Majesty has been further pleased to signify his Royal intention that a suitable proportion of the lands of the Crown should be set apart and the revenues thereof applied to such purposes.”

The result was the passing of the act establishing “The Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning;” the first great step in the advancement of Education in Lower Canada, and one, which though it has been crippled by a continuous and persistent opposition, has produced good results, as it led to the foundation of the McGill University and of the High Schools of Quebec and Montreal, as well as of several other important schools.

The Royal Institution was not organized until 1818. The grants of land promised to it were not given; and supported only by slender legislative grants, and regarded with jealousy by the French ecclesi-

astical party, and only coldly supported by the English population, its function at length became restricted to the management of the endowment of James McGill.

In 1824 the Legislature began a series of enactments by which Schools were established, irrespective of the Royal Institution, and without any adequate provision for their systematic oversight. The act of 1824 authorized Fabrique Schools in the Roman Catholic parishes. In 1829 and following years, various acts were passed, authorizing the appointment of school trustees, appointing members of parliament and others to be visitors, and giving grants for school buildings and the support of teachers. Under these acts sums estimated at £24,000 annually, or nearly one-fifth of the revenue of the country, were distributed to Schools, without securing any permanent system, and apparently with little educational benefit.

These educational experiments culminated in 1834 and 1836, in two acts of the Assembly, which had they not been defeated, would have given an extraordinary and anomalous character to the education of Lower Canada. One was an act to incorporate all Provincial Institutions of Education, with large powers and privileges, and at the same time apparently to obstruct the establishment of new institutions. This was disallowed by the British Government. The other was a school law, practically making each county member a superintendent of education in his own county. This was thrown out by the Legislative Council.

These measures indicate the mutual distrust and antagonism of the different sections of the people, preparatory to the insurrection of 1837, which for the time suspended all thought on the subject of education.

I trust I shall not raise the shades of any buried animosities by quoting the last appeal that I can find at this period on behalf of the British population, from an address of the old Legislative Council in 1835. After reciting some of the facts already stated, they say:—"That no further steps had been taken to accomplish His Majesty's benevolent intentions; that the seminaries of education founded originally under the government of France, enjoyed extensive and valuable endowments, and that large appropriations of waste lands for similar endowments had been sanctioned in Upper Canada, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, but that no provision had been made in

the Province of Lower Canada since it became an appendage of the British Crown, for the permanent endowment either of Preparatory Seminaries or of a University or College, to which your Majesty's subjects using the English tongue could resort for the education of themselves and their children in the higher branches of learning."

There is something pathetic in this last appeal of a body whose power was so soon to be extinguished, and which, whatever its faults, had a right to maintain that Englishmen should not, merely because their lot happened to be cast in Lower Canada, be excluded from that royal bounty which descended on other colonies.

Lord Glenelg in his instructions to the Commissioners of 1836, urgently directed their attention to this subject, and the Commissioners themselves reported in favor of a liberal and comprehensive system ; but in the issue, while the demands of the Seminary of Montreal, which Lord Aberdeen had so strongly repudiated in his despatch of January, 1835, were granted, the Protestants did not obtain an acre of the crown lands.

Under the union of the Canadas, a new school law, the germ of that still existing, was passed. At first there was hope, in this as in other respects, that the union of the Canadas would prove a real fusion into one nationality ; but the old disintegrating forces again prevailed ; and as early as 1845 the educational union was finally dissolved by act of parliament, and the educational interests of the British population of Lower Canada, were left at the disposal of the French majority, with only such checks as might result from the influence of the Upper Canadian members of the Legislature.

Still a great impulse had been given ; and since 1841 a school system has been developed, which, if not perfect, is still highly creditable, when we take into consideration its youth and the difficulties of diversity of race and creed with which it has had to struggle.

The appointment of a Superintendent of Education and the praiseworthy efforts of the present Superintendent and his predecessor, the formation of a Council of Public Instruction, the labours of the Inspectors of Schools, the introduction of assessment for the support of education, the establishment of Provincial Normal Schools, the publication of Journals of Education, and a multitude of minor improvements, have given a new character to the elementary instruc-

tion; while the growth of the institutions of superior education has also been rapid.

In regard to the British and Protestant education, it may, without any invidious comparison, be affirmed that it has maintained its ground, and that the love of education, and a desire for its promotion have been steadily advancing. Our Universities have a standard of education which may challenge comparison with any in America, and that of Montreal has, with little provincial aid, attained a growth which in many respects places it the first in British America. Our superior and common schools, though from causes incident to our position as a minority, they have not attained to the development of the public schools of Upper Canada, have done even more than those of that country, in proportion to the public support which they have received. We have in the main, sustained intact that great principle of union in non-sectarian schools, with which our predecessors began in 1787, and without which we should have succumbed altogether before the dominant race and creed. By steady and persevering effort, amid difficulties and sacrifices unknown to the highly endowed institutions of the majority here, and to our more fortunate countrymen in Upper Canada, we have sustained the cause of British and Protestant education in Lower Canada, and have thus done much to preserve and extend British influence in this country, as well as to aid our countrymen of French origin in their educational progress.

We now stand on the brink of a new revolution, and should be prepared carefully to review the history of the past, and to profit by its lessons, bearing in mind our weakness as a minority, and the extreme rapidity with which the most important changes are carried into effect in this country.

Under the new constitution proposed for British America, it appears that education is to be left to the local legislatures; but that the rights of the minorities are to remain as at the time of the consummation of the federal union. We are further unofficially promised some measures of legislation, at least to give us equal privileges with the Roman Catholic minority of Upper Canada.

To any one acquainted with the history and present state of education in Lower Canada, many questions at once suggest themselves in connection with the probable working of such a system; and these are not easily answered, in as much as we cannot yet have a solution of the main question, whether our British American

federation is to be an efficient government, really uniting the provinces which profess to belong to it, or whether, like some other federal unions, it is to be a mere bubble bursting with the first breath of popular discontent, or a shadow indicating by its position the pressure of the most powerful local influences. These questions at present fill the minds of all thinking men in Canada with anxiety; but they are not questions which we can investigate here; and for our present purpose we may take it for granted that the federal union will be accomplished, and that Protestant education in Lower Canada will be left to the control of the local legislature, with some sort of assurance that the privileges which we may happen to have at the time of the union will be continued to us. The questions thus left—questions on which the men interested in the political affairs of the country, should be glad to have the opinion of those engaged in education—are:—1st, What should those privileges be? and, 2nd, By what guarantees should they be secured?

In entering on the investigation of these points, there are some general considerations to which our attention should first be directed.

One of these is the parallel supposed to exist between the rights and interests of the Protestant minority in Lower Canada, and the Roman Catholic minority in Upper Canada. On this subject I think there is a great and prevalent misconception. It is supposed that what is good and sufficient for one of these minorities must necessarily be good and sufficient for the other. In reality the agreement between the circumstances of the two is limited to these points: 1st, That both are minorities almost equally important as to numbers; and 2nd, That both are entitled to have their rights of conscience respected. But as to the way in which these rights are to be secured in the two cases, no parity can exist. The minority in Lower Canada contend for public and non-denominational schools, the minority in Upper Canada for separate schools. The majority in Lower Canada support a closely denominational and ecclesiastical system, the majority in Upper Canada support a public and non-sectarian system. The minority in Lower Canada exist in the presence of a system supported by a powerful and highly organized state church, and strengthened by differences of race, customs, and language, as well as of religion; the minority of Upper Canada are in presence of a system which professes to give them the benefits of secular instruction, without interfering in any way with

their religion or language. The minority in Lower Canada are wealthy, and liable to have their taxes largely applied to schools which they disapprove; the minority in Upper Canada are in little danger in this respect, and at the most their taxes can be applied only to the teaching of subjects which in a religious point of view are neutral and indifferent. In short, the majority in Upper Canada and the minority in Lower Canada agree in the principle of public schools for the better communication of elementary instruction, the majority in Lower Canada and the minority in Upper Canada agree in the principle of separate schools; and thus while politically the cases of the two minorities may be somewhat similar, educationally they are totally different. It has, however, been argued, in reference to the alleged sectarian character of the schools of Lower Canada, that—"separate schools are allowed on the ground of the conscientious views of those who do not find themselves at liberty to send their children to the schools of the majority, and to make the two cases parallel, it is sufficient to say that Catholics are as much forbidden to send their children to what are called non-sectarian schools as to Protestant schools."* This is, no doubt, true, but then it is the majority in Lower Canada and the minority in Upper Canada who object to the non-sectarian schools; and the conscientious convictions of the two minorities, together with the educational principles, policy and requirements resulting therefrom, are diametrically opposed to each other. It is to be hoped that we shall hear no more comparisons of this kind, at least from Protestants, and I trust that our countrymen in Upper Canada and the Lower Provinces will not be misled by them.

There is another point important to this discussion, which has not, so far as I know, been publicly agitated in connection with the subject, and which I know leads to somewhat dangerous ground, but which, as it is necessary to explain our position, must be briefly noticed. I refer to the fact that the Roman Catholic schools of Lower Canada are objectionable to Protestants, on other than religious grounds. The atmosphere of these schools is decidedly unfavorable to the culture of the qualities which we most esteem in an Englishman. There are other evils more tangible than this. I recently had my attention directed to the advanced English reading book of the Christian Brothers, used in many of the schools of Lower Canada,

* Journal of Education for Lower Canada, October.

and was surprised to find that in its historical and political tone, it is rather an American and Irish, than an English book, while, as might have been expected, in religion it is narrowly Roman Catholic.* In its literary extracts it selects, even from Protestant authors, passages in favour of the Romish Church. It avoids the history and glorious traditions of our mother land, but includes fulsome eulogies of the American constitution and its heroes, and references to the persecutions supposed to have been suffered by the Catholic Irish. Any spirited boy taking his information from such reading, must come from school with a strong tinge of "anglo-phobia." Now without saying a word against the conscientious convictions of our Roman Catholic brethren in the teaching profession, or even as to the inexpediency of training boys to dislike the nation and government under which they live, we may at least be permitted to say that we have a decided aversion to this sort of training for our children, independently altogether of religious considerations. It is but fair to add that I have been informed that an expurgated edition of the book to which I have referred is in progress. Its defects however, are negative as much as positive; and I have referred to it merely as an instance of the influences unfavorable to the healthy development of the British character, which exist in the Schools of the Lower Canada majority, and which constitute a part of the reasons which prevent us from uniting with them.

In the second place we are taught by the history of Protestant education in Lower Canada, not to rely too implicitly on every sort of guarantee that may be offered. The broad ægis of the British Empire and its constitution, might well seem a sufficient guarantee for the rights and interests of Englishmen in any colony; but experience has not proved it to be so in Lower Canada. The influence of the British Empire did not prove sufficient to secure the grants of land promised to the Royal Institution, or the permanent Educational union of Upper and Lower Canada, or a system of education here equally favorable to the interests of the Empire with the Irish national system. Unless under the new federation the power of the Imperial Government shall be more strongly and directly exercised in our affairs than hitherto, we can expect nothing from it, except such stimulus as may be afforded by the personal influence of the able and educated men who may represent Her Majesty as Governors. The influence

* Third Book of Reading Lessons, compiled by the Brothers of the Christian schools. —*Sadlier & Co., New York, and Montreal, 1859.*

thus exerted in favour of education by our late Governor General, Sir Edmund Head, was very beneficial; but it is questionable whether the head of a confederacy including local governments, will be able to act so directly in educational affairs.

Again we are told that there will be a great Protestant and English majority in the Federal legislature, and that the general government will, by its veto, secure our rights. In looking at our past history, we cannot find that Upper Canada has in time past exercised this kindly influence on our behalf under the old union, though it was most directly its interest to do so; nor can we suppose that a representative government will ever be able to offend, on account of a matter so trivial as education has always appeared to party politicians, the majority of one of the most powerful provinces. But in addition to all this, if we state the population of British America in round numbers at three millions and a half, one million and a half are Roman Catholics, all, if we may credit the good evidence already quoted, "forbidden" to send their children to non-sectarian schools, while we know that among the remaining two millions of Protestants and other non-catholics, there is no great unanimity in favour of a public school system. What guarantee can we have that the unanimous million and a half may not on this point overcome the divided two millions, not in the case of Lower Canada only, but of the whole federation, in so far as local legislation will permit.

But lastly we are told that a school law will be passed before the union of the Canadas is dissolved, fixing our position beyond the possibility of its being disturbed. It may well be asked—can this be done? Legislation is a continually operating and accumulating force, that soon transforms itself into that "logic of facts," which sweeps away all stationary guarantees. These are usually but stones thrown into the bed of a rapid stream; they may make a little commotion and splutter, but the stream moves on. In education, every new institution established or required, every slight change of the school law, however apparently innocuous, must have great and wide spread effects for good or evil. Even in the absence of all legislation, the natural growth of the population must soon change the position of the schools; and unless legislation should always be carefully and tenderly guarded, so as to suit the minority, it will prove impossible to respect such guarantees. Past experience has shown also that we have not

so much to fear from any open attack, as from indirect and insidious influences, in the first instance perhaps little understood by any one.

Let me not be misunderstood. I have no desire to insinuate that the majority in Lower Canada are prepared to treat the minority with injustice. I only mean to affirm that the schools which they regard as best suited to them are not suited to us, and that it will be difficult for them, however well disposed, to respect our interests, without the exercise of a self-denial which we can hardly expect. In these circumstances they must not blame us if we carefully inquire as to our position and prospects, and endeavour to surround ourselves with as many safeguards as possible, just as they in like manner desire to secure their peculiar views and institutions in entering the proposed federation. Nor must it be supposed that in this matter we are selfish, and careless of the interests of others. The British minority of Lower Canada owe it as a sacred duty to their ancestors and to their posterity, to the principles which they profess, and even to the population amidst which they are placed, to preserve their educational institutions intact; and it must be evident to every thoughtful mind that should the British interest in Lower Canada be reduced to insignificance, and this province become wholly gallicized and romanized, the federation will be a failure, and the people of Lower Canada will be among the most serious sufferers amidst the throes of its dissolution.

Let us then, in view of these considerations, inquire as to the provisions necessary for Protestant education in Lower Canada, under the new circumstances into which it is about to enter, and more especially, to those demanded by the Association recently formed in this city for the protection of Protestant education.*

1. It is proposed that we should demand a separate Protestant Superintendent and Council of Public Instruction, the latter to represent, as fairly as may be, the leading Protestant denominations. The ground for this demand is not any dissatisfaction with the administration of educational affairs by the present Superintendent. On the contrary, I believe it will be admitted that under his management, education has made substantial advances, and the defects of the existing system have been greatly modified, or have been at least smoothed over in such a manner as to rob them of many obnoxious

* "Suggestions and considerations presented to the friends of Protestant Education, in Lower Canada,"—*Montreal, Dec., 1864.*

features. But this circumstance makes us all the more uneasy. The power now wielded with tact and firmness, and under the government of United Canada, may produce the most opposite effects, under an officer of different character, and without the checks and encouragements afforded by the existing union.

I confess that under the present constitution, I should doubt as to a division of the Department of Education. It would cause additional expense. It might produce contentions between the departments. The Superintendent of the minority might be a man of little influence, and inferior in all respects to the man who could be secured for the larger office. Without underrating these evils, I still think that, under the new constitution at least, we are bound to demand this change, as giving the only security possible for the unfettered development of our Protestant schools. While linked in any way to the system of the majority, our system will be cramped in its development, it will lack unity, and it will be unable to watch effectually the interests of the smaller Protestant communities, a matter of much importance even to the existence of these communities. It will also want that distinctiveness which alone can give it any share of the sympathy of our countrymen in other parts of British America. Without a separate Council the minority cannot form a united body, capable of discussing its own plans and of advocating its own interests, and causes of complaint which the department cannot effectually redress will continually arise.

It may be said that minorities have no such rights anywhere, and that the minority in Upper Canada will claim similar privileges. We can urge in reply, that if a cordon is to be drawn around the French nationality in Lower Canada, the English within that pale have a right to a similar protection; and that this is not a mere question of greater and less numbers, but of the maintenance of British education in a province of the British Empire.

2. One of the most serious defects of our present school law is its imperfect protection of the rights of the minority in the disposal of their school taxes, and all parties seem agreed that some change is required in this matter. Whatever the amendment of the details of the law in this respect, we should insist on the recognition of the principle that the school taxes of Protestant rate-payers should not, except by their express desire, be devoted to the support of Roman Catholic schools, and that the taxes levied on commercial corporations

should be divided in some equitable manner, so as not to interfere with the interests of Protestant shareholders. This might be determined by unanimous consent of such corporations, or otherwise the tax might be divided according to population, or better still, according to the stock held by shareholders of the respective creeds.

3. There is a manifest injustice in the dependence of Protestant school districts on the boundaries which may be fixed for parishes or municipalities. Without ascribing to the majority in the Roman Catholic districts any desire to do wrong, it is evident that they cannot be expected to arrange their boundaries in such a manner as to accommodate the minority; and the same evil may be experienced by Roman Catholic schools in Protestant districts. There seems to be no good reason why the districts for dissentient schools should not be established without any reference to these boundaries, and to suit the convenience of the contributors to such schools. This privilege has already been granted to the separate schools of Upper Canada.

4. The amount of provincial aid granted to education by Parliament will always be determined by the majority, but it should be recognized as a rule that all such aids should be distributed between the Protestant and Roman Catholic departments according to the populations they respectively represent. This may be regarded as in one respect unjust to the British population, as being on the whole the largest contributors to the revenue; but then it must be admitted that it is the duty and interest of the wealthy to contribute toward the education of the poor, even if the education given should not be in all respects such as they approve.

The general question of legislative aids to education must be left open to discussion, and very extreme opinions have been maintained in regard to it. In former times the practice seems to have been to scatter money throughout the country without any proper safeguard on its expenditure, or provision to stimulate contributions from the people interested. More recently it has been maintained that no such aids should be given under any circumstances. The truth lies between these extremes. In a country where there are few endowments for education, and where the people require to be stimulated to attend to it, much good may be done by judicious grants, especially in aid of the superior class of schools, and of those of the poorer districts. But such grants should always be made the

means of drawing forth the liberality of the people, and improving the schools; and therefore the most stringent conditions should be exacted as to the amount contributed by the people, the number of pupils in attendance, the duration of the schools, and the character of the instruction given. These facts must be ascertained not only by returns but by regular and systematic inspection; and these will not secure the end in view, unless the employment of trained teachers, and the regular registration of the school attendance, be insisted on. In relation to some of these points, our present school law is still very imperfect, and its working necessarily gives good ground to object against the distribution of the grants.

Taking it for granted, however, that parliamentary aids to education will be given, and that measures will be taken to ensure their just distribution, we should, I think, demand that the distinctive principles of our two systems of education, should be acknowledged by a preliminary division of such grants between the Protestant and Roman Catholic schools, and that fair scope should thus be given for a trial of their respective merits and defects.

5. On behalf of that portion of our population which is non-catholic but not Protestant, I would say, that it might be left at liberty to avail itself of the provisions either of the Protestant or Catholic school system at its option; and it would be necessary, in order to avoid difficulty, that its rights in the matter should be recognized.

There is another class of persons also, not numerous, but having equal rights of conscience, whose wants should be provided for. I refer to French, German, and other Protestants not speaking English, and to isolated english-speaking Protestants and Catholics in French districts. While the utmost care should be taken not unduly to exempt any one from the school tax, the greatest possible facilities should be given to such persons to contribute to and use such schools as they may select, and also to combine with other small communities in supporting itinerating teachers, or to husband their rates with the view of sustaining a school in alternate years or in short portions of the year. It is the more necessary to mention such cases, because in a separation of the school systems, they might be neglected, or differences might arise in relation to them.

6. There are some classes of institutions which cannot be supported altogether by local rates or public grants, and whose permanence

should be guaranteed to the Protestant population. I refer to the Universities and their affiliated Colleges, the Provincial Normal School, and the Academies and High schools. For these a special provision should be made, in such a manner as to prevent their undue interference with the aids to the lower schools. They should either have, as originally contemplated by the British Government, grants of public land given for their support, or special funds set apart for them.

In regard to these institutions, the principle of local taxation does not apply. They are not schools for a locality, but in some respects serve for the whole Province, since the benefits which they give are diffused throughout the country, in the provision of pastors, of teachers, and of professional men. Though few, and situated in the large centres of population, yet without them the inhabitants of the smallest and most remote school districts might suffer serious inconvenience. Their value is not to be estimated by the population that may surround them, but by the pupils actually receiving their benefits, and by the character of the education which they give. They should also be permanently endowed, and not dependent on the fluctuating resource of annual grants; since in order that they may be efficient, they must gather around them learned and able men, and must permanently retain the services of such men.

Hitherto, as compared with the colleges and grammar schools of Upper Canada, and with the large endowments preserved by the liberality of the British Government to the old French Seminaries, institutions of this class for the British population of Lower Canada have been starved; and but for private benefactions some of them might have ceased to exist. Their claims should now be urged, and should if possible be settled in some permanent way. It is to be hoped that the majority itself will see the wisdom as well as the justice of this measure, and that the people of Upper Canada will make it a point of conscience to obtain this guarantee for the Protestant population of Lower Canada before the final separation takes place.

It is further to be observed, that as already stated, the Government actually owes to these higher institutions grants of land which, long ago promised, have not been received. These old rights should now be re-asserted, and we should not rest content until we can obtain grants corresponding to those given in Upper Canada, or to those en-

joyed by the Seminary of Montreal and that of Quebec with its extension in the Laval University. We have also a right to insist that some consideration should be given to the probable increase of value of such lands, had they been granted in 1801.

In an able article in the *Journal of Education for Lower Canada*, it is argued, that under the present system the Protestants receive more than their share of the superior education fund. But admitting the correctness of the figures given, and admitting also that the Superintendent has acted in the matter with all fairness, there would remain for consideration, in addition to the facts stated in that article, the following questions, all more or less important to a correct understanding of the position of the Protestants.

(1.) The claim of the Protestant higher institutions to grants of land, commensurate with those enjoyed by the great Roman Catholic Seminaries and their University.

(2.) How far the aids to such institutions should be based on population or number of pupils.

(3.) What institutions should be regarded as provincial and what as local.

(4.) What classes of institutions have a right to share in the superior education fund.

(5.) The grants given in former years for buildings; and the progressive diminution of some of the grants in recent years.

(6.) The conditions attached to the aids given, in some cases.

(7.) The relative proportion of the aids given and the contributions of the supporters of the Schools.

(8.) The condition and management of the lands known as the "Jesuits' estates," and of the superior education fund.

Some of these points we have already noticed, and it would occupy too much of our time to enter into others, which would require statements of figures and minute details. It is sufficient to say that they have led some of those who have given attention to the subject, to very different conclusions from those of the article referred to, with regard to the effects of the present system, while they by no means remove the fears of a change for the worse under the new constitution.

7. There is one subject affecting the interests of the higher Education, which, not unnaturally, seems to have been overlooked by our politicians. I refer to the legal value attached to University degrees, as qualifying for the learned professions. This, on the terms of the published agreement, will be left to the local governments. Such a course would lead to great evils. It would tend to the erection of different standards in different Provinces, and to give to the degrees of our Universities a merely local value. The degrees of all the existing Universities should be degrees for all British America. The standard of professional education in the different provinces should as far as possible be assimilated, and raised sufficiently high to prevent the interference of uneducated practitioners; and, if possible, to secure for our degrees that recognition in Great Britain which the separate provinces have as yet been unable to obtain. In order to these ends the general government should assume the supervision of this matter, or should at least retain the power to revise all local legislation in regard to it. Perhaps the best method to secure the desired result, would be the appointment of an Educational Council similar to the Medical Council in Great Britain, and to charge this body with the oversight of all matters relating to professional education and the value of degrees therein.

I have now stated what I conceive to be the most important points which demand the attention of Protestant educationists in Lower Canada, in prospect of our new constitution. Others may occur to other thinkers, and some of those which I have mentioned may not seem equally important to all. The details of the mode in which these guarantees may be best secured belong to the politician. My present object will have been attained if I have succeeded in stimulating thought on these momentous questions, and in contributing somewhat to a solution which, while not injurious to our countrymen who differ from us on educational questions, will secure and perpetuate the existence of English and Protestant education in Lower Canada.

I would say finally, that in my judgment, no people was ever under greater necessity to make education, both higher and elementary, a prominent object of attention, than that of British America, in entering on the new constitution proposed to us. On this, under God, will depend our progress and prosperity, and the consideration we shall enjoy. While in our federation there will be discordant inter-

ests, races and creeds, and great local separation of its component parts, there will be none of those strong feelings of popular enthusiasm which tend so much to the strength and unity of nations. We have no George Washington or William Tell, no stirring memories of great deeds done or sufferings endured to secure our national existence, and the truly national feeling which exists among us, centres at this moment more at London and Paris, than at Ottawa. Popular indifference on the one hand, and mere declamation on the other; will not supply the want of those powers which stir the hearts even of rude nations. We must endeavour to fill their place by the formation of an enlightened public opinion, and by the cultivation of minds fitted to guide aright the destinies of the country, and to reconcile its jarring interests without any fatal sacrifice of truth and right.