

The Problem of Private Schools

(Special article by HARRY G. T. PERRY)

A FUNCTION of government is to find solutions of problems that disturb the body politic—the people.

The art of high statesmanship is to so modify the will of the majority that the rights of minority groups are protected to such a degree that they do not over-ride the will of the majority, and yet receive consideration and protection.

It is on these foundations that political liberty and democratic government rest and continue.

If it were not so, a majority could become as tyrannous and autocratic as an oligarchy or dictatorship.

It is fitting therefore to emphasize that political democracy is expressed by legislation and law as the will of the majority qualified by fair consideration and recognition of the reasonable rights of minorities.

Distinguished from statesmanship by statesmen are cunning politicians who seek power and the emoluments of office rather than justice, fairness and tolerance in law.

Hence, such politicians frequently ignore, postpone, defer or deflect to municipalities, school, hospital or other boards the claims of minorities. In doing so they are undoubtedly politically wise in a selfish way, as Machiavelli so long ago pointed out. For they know that those who endeavor to grant even a part of the rights sought by minorities receive no gratitude from the beneficiaries and only condemnation from the majorities.

This inevitably results in their political defeat or isolation and their sentence to political oblivion.

Nevertheless, through the years there have been sufficient brave men and women in public life who have pursued their efforts to secure minority rights. Many have lived to see the fruition of their work enacted into law by the same cunning and cautious politicians who opposed them previously, and see them accept the applause of the slow-moving public who had become converted to the necessity of such legislation.

Numerous incidents could be recalled even in British Columbia to substantiate the above. At random we may mention votes for women, votes for British East Indians, for Chinese, Native Indians; the eight-hour day, minimum wages, factory supervision and many others.

Among the many other problems of concern to minority groups in B.C. is that of private schools.

Private schools are recognized in some measure at least by the Education Department as part of the educational system of B.C., but are not recognized as part of the public school system.

The question arises in many minds as to why private schools exist and continue to flourish notwithstanding there is a comparatively good public school system in B.C.

One explanation is that some of the private schools are patterned on the British grammar schools and that they give a better all round education, especially as to classics, discipline, good manners and sports, than the public schools. Parents who can afford it are those who send their children to private schools of this type. Students matriculate therefrom in the same examinations as public school students.

The problem of this type of school is not very pressing and it is disputable between the governors of such schools as to what aid, if any, should be accorded them by the province.

But there is another type of private school maintained by religious groups, due to their conscientious objections to the strictly secular education of the public schools.

With strong conviction they believe in a religious atmosphere pervading the classroom. Or at least they object to a few parts of the public school curriculum, especially as it affects history and biology.

This situation is not peculiar to British Columbia. It exists in every province, but in other provinces the difference appears to have been composed.

It is also recalled that in Great Britain the Non-conformists, as well as Roman Catholics, Hebrews and others maintained their own schools. The Non-conformists, in particular, went to jail rather than pay their school taxes which supported the national schools where only clergymen of the Church of England read prayers.

This objection is not applicable to the B.C. public schools where no denominational or indeed hardly any religious influence is permissible.

An accusation against our public schools is not that they are denominational or even religious, but that they are so extremely secular as to be actually pagan.

Hence we have our fine public school system supported by the State, supplemented by our high-class grammar school type of private schools, and in addition our private schools supported by religious groups, mainly Catholic in B.C.

Due to certain unfortunate conditions at Millardville, near New Westminster, the problem of the religious type of private schools has been brought into focus as a governmental problem.

The crux of the problem is on the question of how much, if any, state support shall be given to such schools. For the cost of maintaining these schools entirely, without any cost to the State at all other than for certain free text books and matriculation examinations, has become too heavy a burden for religious bodies to bear.

One cannot say the problem does not exist. It will become more acute later unless dealt with in the near future.

There is, of course, the powerful majority in B.C. who are committed to an exclusive type of secular education in our public schools.

On the other hand, there is a powerful minority who conscientiously desire their children should receive an education tempered with religion.

Up to the present, this minority (not entirely Catholic) have provided the entire education of their children without any cost whatever to the State. In this respect, they have saved millions of dollars to the taxpayers. In addition, they have, as property-owning parents, paid their school taxes to support the State public school system from which their children derive no benefit.

As law-abiding citizens we should abide by the law. But Conscience knows no law but Conscience. Hence, in democratic states legislation has been provided on many matters for conscientious objectors.

Legislation should be by the will of the majority, but in a truly democratic society the majority should realize and exercise its high responsibility of being fair and reasonable towards the claims of the minorities.

We have a problem of a minority in regard to education. It should be considered by all fair-minded people in a spirit of responsibility, of sageness, tolerance and understanding.

It should be considered more especially by political parties who should resolve upon a policy and not ignore, defer or by-pass it.

Every thinking person knows this problem is loaded with dynamite for cowardly, ignorant, self-seeking candidates and parties.

But that should not and will not deter a few brave souls from trying to solve the problem come what may to their personal success.

No solution can ever be complete or satisfying in full to either majority or minority opinion. No gratitude can be expected.

But something could be done to compose this different viewpoint and heal this festering sore, in part, of the body politic, that might otherwise become a dangerous cancer.

History, even in B.C., shows that conscientious objectors have a record of gaining their objectives in time, and in some cases securing more than they should, and usually after very serious disturbances physically and mentally.

This article is written by a Protestant to provoke serious thought and tolerant consideration of a problem on the horizon.

At the risk of being misunderstood, misinterpreted, calumniated, pilloried, ostracized and damned, we venture to propose as an immediate step that the Government appoint a Royal Commission of one or of three persons to inquire forthwith into this problem and to make recommendations.

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As I See It



by
Elmore
Philpott

Churchill's Easy Pace

LONDON. — In a few hours I shall be wending my way north again, through the industrial Midlands of England, and into Scotland.

I decided that in trying to cover this strange of all elections I could not do better than to follow Mr. Churchill around. But the catch to that is—the old war horse hasn't gone any place. Apart from his opening speech at Liverpool, his speaking (till this final week) has been done in his own constituency. And he has made only three speeches.

But now he is off for what are the two most crucial areas in this election—the Midlands of England and the Lowlands of Scotland.

THE INSIDE story of this election campaign (for what it is worth) is this:

The Tories figured they were sure to win provided that nobody or no issue got the people too "stirred up." Hence, says the story, Lord Woolton convinced Mr. Churchill that the less he said, the better—and the more mildly he said what he did say, the better still.

That is precisely what Mr. Churchill has done. He has not exactly cooed like a dove—but the old lion has surely not roared, but has purled with a benignity really astonishing.

THE POLITICAL professionals here say that under Lord Woolton the Tories have built up the most amazing political machine in British history. One man, who is something of an international expert, tells me it is probably the most efficient machine ever built up in any country.

By "machine" of course I mean the local and national organization whose duty it is to do two things:

1—Find out who the party's supporters are.

2—Get those supporters to poll on election day.

All the above sounds simple. But as everyone with practical experience in politics knows, it is about 75 per cent of the secret of winning and losing elections.

In the words of Israel Tarte of Quebec, a famous Canadian political boss, "elections are not won by prayers." Many of them are won by machines.

A YOUNG MAN who is a CCP supporter in Canada but who had a research job to do which enabled him to see inside the two political machines here informs me that there just is no comparison.

The Labor machine is good—indeed extremely good in many industrial districts. But the Tory machine is in a class by itself.

THE STOCK brokers are betting that the Tories will win by at least 23 seats. But I do not find the actual candidates on either side nearly so confident as the stock brokers that they know what is going to happen.

Mr. R. A. Butler—Churchill's right-hand man and quite possibly his successor—told me, after his trip through the Midlands, that the Tories would win by at least 30 seats.

Mr. Hugh Gaitskell, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, covered much the same ground, and told me, with equal confidence, that it will go the other way by about that same margin.

As for me—I do not hazard even a guess.

LETTERBOX

CHILDREN IN STREETS

Editor,
Daily News:

Would you kindly publish this letter? I am certain it will (or should) be of interest to quite a few people living on Eighth Avenue East.

I am not the first to voice this complaint, as I have heard drivers do the same, at times, but in quite different "languages." But why, oh why! do parents have to let their small children play on the street, when most of them have yards or lawns to play in?

Most of these kids are between one and five, certainly too young to understand danger or don't the parents care? I doubt that, but I can say without fear of contradiction that accidents will, and do happen, and the car drivers, no matter how cautious, are after all only human too.

To quote the old saying: "The ounce of prevention is still worth the pound of cure."
MRS. M. E. PETERSEN.

Report from Parliament

By E. T. APPLEWHITE, M.P.

ADVERTISING PROGRAM.—Action taken by the board of directors of the Fisheries Council of Canada at a meeting held in Ottawa on October 2 and 3 marks another step forward in the sequence of events which started at the N.F.I. conference in Boston last April, at which C. J. Morrow had proposed a \$5,000,000 five-year advertising program.

A section of the American industry suggested, as an immediate alternative to Mr. Morrow's proposal, that the promotion of the sale of consumer packaged frozen fish in the U.S.A. might well be undertaken and that such a scheme would get the necessary support. Data has been secured as to the approximate production of consumer packaged frozen fillets by the U.S.A., Canada, Norway and Iceland, destined for the U.S. market, and the U.S.A. committee has invited the other countries to ascertain if their packers are willing to contribute one-quarter of a cent per pound on this production as a contribution to an advertising and promotional campaign destined to increase consumption of this product in the United States. The Directors of the Fisheries Council approved in principle Canadian participation in the proposed campaign.

ESSEX WEST
Don Brown of Essex West made an excellent speech in the Debate on the Address, on behalf of his constituents, introducing a subject which is not only vital to the constituency he represents (Windsor) but also to the whole economy of the Dominion of Canada. In describing graphically the situation at Windsor the first of all gave us an excellent and very interesting outline of the geography of that part of the country as well as the economics. He referred particularly to the auto supply and accessory plants there which are large, and employ a great many people. The community is serviced by several railroads including the Canadian National, Michigan Central, Canadian Pacific, Chesapeake and Ohio, Washburn, and also the Essex Terminal Railroad, providing a terminal operation. His plea for more employment in that area drew sympathy and support from all.

Let's look at a few of the Bills which have been introduced this session:
There is the Act to amend the Canadian National-Canadian Pacific Act, to provide that the annual report submitted to Parliament by the Directors of Canadian National Railways shall contain a separate section giving in a summary manner information concerning co-operative projects.

Another government bill, to amend the Maritime Freight Rate Act, deals with a matter concerning only Eastern Canada.

The government measure to amend the North Fraser Harbor Commission's Act is of very local interest, as is the proposed Toronto Harbor Commission's Act.

Of more general concern is Mr. Abbott's measure to approve the financial agreement between Canada and the United Kingdom, signed on June 29 this year, extending the terms of our interest-free loan to Britain.

M. LaCrosse has introduced a bill to amend the Criminal Code, the purpose of which is to prevent the dissemination through the mails of subversive propaganda.

From the above you will see that some rather dull sessions are ahead of us.

But, Paul Martin has already introduced his resolution providing the Old Age Pensions law. The resolution states that it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the payment of pensions, without a means test, of forty dollars a month to persons who have attained the age of seventy years and have appropriate residence qualifications. This measure is the No. 1 reason for the holding of a second session this year—and we will doubtless hear a great deal more about it, once the Address in Reply has been disposed of.

GORDON ROOT THERE
It was a nice surprise to run into Gordon Root, Public Relations Officer for Columbia Cellulose, in the restaurant yesterday. I hope to see more of him as I understand he is down here for several days.

COMPENSATION
Mr. LaPointe has introduced a resolution to amend the National Defence Act to provide

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Rainfall at Prince Rupert in 1950. That can be reckoned a high total but 144 inches between Bella Coola and Island merits mention thund'rous, praise.

DIFFERENT DOLLAR
Ottawa continues to the Canadian dollar forty cents. You can see the gospel truth Canadian dollar has one value. There are, in fact, some much more able than forty cents, ample, as rent money, a dollar is worth 75¢, better than 40¢. Special value is 5 cents less, according to what the buys. Yet one hesitates a dollar for it can be much today, and soon tomorrow.

Though nearly does, when making somewhere, we decide (Continued on p. 2)

Some light

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