

FROM THE TAX-PAYER'S POINT OF VIEW.—II.

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Mr. John Millar, Deputy Minister of Education, in his pamphlet on the Educational System of the Province of Ontario, says: "All persons are taxed to support education because its general diffusion is for the public good." It seems to be necessary to explain the meaning of the word "public." Does it include the United States, or is it confined to the limits of Canada only? or are the prospects of the individual to be considered irrespective of the fact that, where we sow and tax ourselves for the sowing, our neighbours reap the harvest? To whom is left the task of ascertaining what is the public good? Is it left entirely to those who have charge of the Educational Department, whose minds we may naturally expect to be dominated by one idea, the perfection of their department? If so, upon what premises do they arrive at their conclusion?

It is true, to go one step further than Mr. Millar, that the doctrine is now firmly established and generally recognized, that free education, including the general culture of the mind, up to a certain point, is not a privilege, but a natural right. The limit of the right of parents to demand free education from the State may be said to have been described by the memorandum published in 1894 by the Educational Department in England, setting forth the privileges of parents under the Educational Act of 1891; in which the principle is thus laid down: "Every father and mother in England and Wales has a right to free education, without payment or charge of any kind, for his or her children between the ages of three and fifteen." We may assume, therefore, that after the age of fifteen the liability of the taxpayer is no longer a concession to a natural right, and is