

section where there are twelve children and property to the value of \$4000, there shall be for one school term in each year, a public free school.

Our present system of free education has been in operation since 1864. We have therefore before us the experience of ten years. It is true, we cannot claim perfection for all the details of our School system: amendments and modifications are, and will be required, yet, on the whole, past experience has so fixed the idea of *Education* in the public mind, that very few would now be found willing to see our scheme of universal and free education abandoned. It is true, by some, Separate Schools are asked for, but where such is the case, the demand is not made with a design hostile to general and free education, but simply to ingraft upon it religious instruction, that it may more readily subserve what is conceived to be a higher interest.—We may, therefore, now regard the idea of free and general education as firmly and conscientiously rooted in the minds of the people, who value it as a great privilege which *must be maintained*. In this conviction we are in harmony with a large majority of the people of the remainder of Canada; also of the United States, and the more highly enlightened nations of Europe. Indeed, universal public education is the great idea which, at the present day, engages the attention of statesmen, philanthropists, and philosophers, in all civilized countries, who recognize, in all their legislation and teaching, the necessity of education for the people. In large communities and in small ones, the truth is alike unquestionable, that if the masses of the people are to be elevated and saved from vice,—if they are ever to understand their own interest as well as that of the State,—if they are to be relied on as an integral part of a progressive and virtuous community, it must and will be by the agency of a system of public instruction, reaching to all classes, and inspiring a common ambition and aim.

No blessing can be of more value to any people than a good system of education, one that fosters and promotes Truth and Virtue and at the same time stimulates to activity and enterprise, as in it rests the foundation of principles of universal prosperity, since it necessarily promotes political sagacity and commercial success, whilst ignorance is the parent of Poverty, Crime, and national Debasement. With such convictions, the friends of universal education, to be consistent with themselves, and to act in harmony with their own professions, must look to the Government and insist that, among the first duties of public men, is that of casting around the interests of Education the authority and influence of Law,