

rates,—conditions which both Protestant and Roman Catholic members of two successive administrations, felt to be the most easy and just on which any persons could be allowed exemption from what is common to all classes of their fellow subjects. This twelfth section of the Separate School Act is as it was prepared and introduced by the Roman Catholic section of the administration, and was excepted by the parties concerned without the slightest objection or hesitation; but within a few months past episcopal commands have been issued for its repeal! The second and principal section of the bill required to be passed by the legislature, (and for not voting for which this session, episcopal denunciations have been officially pronounced against several members of the legislature), is as follows:

"Notwithstanding any thing in the above named (Separate School) Act, or in any School Act or Acts to the contrary, every person paying rates, whether as a proprietor or tenant, who, when required to pay his school taxes or rates, shall present to the collector a certificate in duplicate from the secretary-treasurer of the trustees, or any board of trustees of any Roman Catholic separate school or schools, that he has paid all school rates or taxes required by such trustees or board for the then current year, shall be exempted from the payment of all rates or taxes imposed for the building or support of common schools, or common school libraries, for the same year; and it shall be the duty of such collector to retain one of the above named certificates, and sign his name to the other to be returned by him to the rate payer."

This section so imperiously demanded, but so wholly inadmissible in principle and detail, contains extraordinary provisions.

It relieves trustees of separate schools from imposing school rates upon themselves for their schools, imposes upon the municipality the obligation of *levying* rates for separate schools, the same as for public schools—an obligation which is imposed exclusively upon the trustees of "dissentient" schools in Lower Canada—so much so that even the power (were it disposed to exercise it) to levy rates for the support of dissentient schools in Lower Canada is taken from the municipality.

It invests the secretary-treasurer of any separate school corporation with the enormous and unheard of power of interposing between a municipal council, and the collection of all school rates levied by it, and of exempting every rate-payer of every religious persuasion from payment of school rates; and this he can do by a variety of means, and throughout all Upper Canada, and that without the slightest restriction, the slightest liability to any penalty whatever, but with absolute impunity. To one rate-payer he can say, "If you will pay two thirds, or one half, or one quarter as much to support the separate school or schools, as the municipal council has taxed you to support the public schools, I will give you a duplicate certificate of exemption." In this way a *bribe* may be held out to every rate-payer to support separate schools. But to those who would not accept of this bribe, one of another kind could be offered. The secretary-treasurer, or his agent, might say to each rate-payer who might refuse, on any terms, to support a separate school, "If you do not wish to pay any rate to support the public schools, I will give you a certificate that you have paid all the rates that the Roman Catholic trustees require you to pay for the support of the separate school for the current year." In this way might a *bribe* be held out to every rate-payer, not to support the public schools.

But apart from the preceding considerations, such a provision would put it out of the power of any municipal council, to levy any rate for the erection or payment of school premises or buildings, or for the support of public schools, without levying such sum for separate schools as the trustees of such schools may succeed in diverting from those purposes, by the power of ecclesiastical authority and by a two-fold system of bribery. Nor could any trustees of public schools levy and collect any rate whatever, for the support of their schools, from persons who might be furnished with the said Roman Catholic trustee certificate of exemption. Nor would it be possible for any municipal council to know how much per pound it would be necessary to levy in order to raise any sum or sums that might be required for the support of public schools, as it could not tell what amount might be obtained by trustees of separate schools; nor could trustees of public schools in any section, or town, or school division, know on whom to levy school rates, as they would have no means of knowing who had obtained, or who might obtain, a certificate of exemption from the adverse trustees of a Roman Catholic separate school.

It is perfectly clear, that should such a Bill become law, there would soon be an end of both free schools and public schools, and the trustees of Roman Catholic separate schools would possess a direct and indirect power in each municipality far greater than that of the municipal council and trustees of public schools together. Yet such a Bill intact is demanded, under the pretext of placing the supporters of separate schools in Upper Canada upon the same footing with the supporters of dissentient schools in Lower Canada! The most vigorous attempts are made to force such a Bill upon Upper Canada against the almost unanimous voice of its representatives and their constituents; and ecclesiastical penalties are inflicted upon members from Lower Canada who will not vote for this gross outrage upon the public school system, and the Municipal, and Protestant, and individual Rights of the people of Upper Canada!

The passing of this Bill is demanded at the next session of the Legislature. The same influence which has been brought to bear upon members of the Legislature, is exerted over each elector in each County, Riding, and Municipality. The issue of the question is before the Country; it is imposed upon it by the authorities of one religious persuasion. It cannot be evaded. It is, therefore, with a view to this issue that I have felt it my duty thus to defend our school law and system from the attacks made upon it, and from the efforts to destroy it—efforts unprecedented in the annals of Canadian history. In the eventful issue of this question, it remains to be seen whether the people of Upper Canada are to be under the rule of episcopal circulars and mandates, or continue to be a free people—whether their own voice is to control legislation for themselves, or whether legislation is to be forced upon them from without—whether their school system which has been established and thus far matured with so much unanimity and at so large an expenditure of their labour and money, and which equally protects and consults the just rights and interests of all sects and parties, is to be subverted or perpetuated—whether the principle of equal rights and privileges is to be maintained among all classes and denominations, and "all semblance of Church and State union discontinued," or whether that union in one of its worst forms is to be established, placing each Municipal Council, each corporation of public schools, each