

It is very natural, of course, that a clause of the Act strongly providing for the punctual payment of small debts, should be unpopular with persons reluctant to pay those debts; but that surely is no valid reason or argument for a poor man being left at the pleasure of such debtors, and long denied the small fruits of his hard labours. Men of business know that frequent and punctual payments are, as a general rule, the easiest payments; and those who would do to a Teacher as they would be done by, will be anxious that he should have security for the punctual payment of his means of subsistence; while those who wish to retain themselves what is due to the Teacher, ought to be compelled to pay him.

Should Trustees, in any case, resort to prevarication in respect to this clause of the Act, such an evil can be but partial, and will soon cure itself, as it will recoil upon its authors.

My strong conviction is, that this least popular clause of the Act—though attended with some opposition, and perhaps inconvenience in some cases, on its first introduction—will ultimately, if allowed to remain, prove a great boon to Teachers, a great help to Trustees, and a great benefit to Common Schools.

Some attempts have been made to excite opposition to the Act, by representing the system as *compulsory*, and that Education should be left to *voluntary effort*. The duty of the State to provide for the education of its population has been admitted and avowed by every constitutional government of Christendom, as well Republican as Monarchical; and I do not think the Government and Legislature of Canada will abandon their duty in this respect to gratify the selfishness of some wealthy individuals, or the ultraism of certain partizans. But our system of Schools is not *compulsory*, in the sense in which that term is applied to despotic governments. The vote of the Parliamentary grant is the voluntary Act of the people, through their Legislative Representatives; the reception of a part of that grant and the levying of an assessment, is the voluntary act of the people in each District through their Council Representatives; the reception of a part of the School Fund by any School Section, and the levying of a Rate-bill, is the voluntary Act of the people in such Section, through their Trustee Representatives: in addition to which, the present Act does not require Trustees to levy a Rate-bill at all,