

CHURCH SCHOOLS LEAD TO A STATE CHURCH.

To give any religious denomination the privilege of Separate schools for their children, means that the State bestows upon that denomination an exclusive privilege, something that cannot be granted any other, for were the government to grant a like concession to other churches Public schools would become impossible. It is only by people of all creeds joining together that schools can be maintained. In an agricultural country like ours, as has been pointed out, the number of children in the average school district is small, and, at the best, the teacher has few pupils. Introduce the principle that a favored sect is to have its own school, and there can be none for the children of other faiths, and so, just because of the religious belief of their parents, that they do not belong to the sect it favors, the State deprives their children of their right to an elementary education. The government that does this demonstrates its preference for one particular church, and gives it special benefits at the expense of members of all the other churches. There is no escaping this plain truth, that Separate schools imply a State church. Are we in Canada to ignore the experience of Europe on this point? With the record before us of the evils that have flowed from State churches, are we going to fall into the same pit? The argument against Separate schools is strong on the ground of expediency, that they defeat the purpose of assimilating the diverse elements of our population and fitting the rising generation for fulfilling the duties called for in a self-governing country, but the argument is tenfold stronger and conclusive to all lovers of liberty, that such action is an interference by the State with the consciences of its people. In our age there is no saying more readily accepted as undeniable than that it belongs not to the government to dictate what shall be the creed of province or dominion, for it is justly held that religious beliefs are beyond and above the functions of the civil magistrate. Whoever gives his assent to this truth, should, in all consistency, set his face as flint against Separate schools, for the two are irreconcilable. If you say the government has no right to enact that a particular church shall be the church of the