

nearly free; and in cities and towns are, for the most part in good buildings, well furnished and taught by able teachers.

Under such circumstances, it is extremely difficult to compel or persuade any considerable number, much less the whole, of any class of religionists to separate themselves from such schools, and erect separate ones at greater expense and less efficient; and that, upon the ground, not that the public schools interfere with their faith or attempt to proselyte them, but that Roman Catholics associate with Protestants and acquire personal feelings of respect and affection, which precludes the opportunity of constantly inculcating, and blunts the edge of the teaching, that Protestantism is a species of infidelity, that Protestants are a species of infidels, and should be loved, and pitied and prayed for, not even as nominal Christians, put as heretics and infidels,—that any other feeling in regard to Protestantism or Protestants, is dangerous “*indifferentism*,” only a shade better than infidelity itself,—that, therefore, the public schools supported by Protestants are infidel school, and the whole school system, created under the auspices of successive administrations and parliaments, and developed and sustained by the people of Upper Canada with unparalleled unanimity and liberality, is an infidel system! We have only to read episcopal circulars and their newspaper organs, to see that I have fallen far below the reality in thus epitomizing this foreign element which has been imported into Upper Canada since 1850, and which is as foreign to the spirit and feelings that Roman Catholics have in all past time cultivated and cherished, and which the great majority of them still cherish, in regard to their fellow subjects and the educational institutions of their country, as it is alien to the spirit of truth, and the progress of Canadian civilization. I have reason to believe that it is by extreme exertions of ecclesiastical authority that many Roman Catholics can be made to endorse such teaching against the character and cherished institutions of the great majority of the people of Upper Canada, and assume or continue the support of separate schools. Hence the effort to deprive them of their exercise of choice, by not leaving it to them to express their individual wishes from year to year, but endeavouring to include them as a body, placing the power of exemption from the public schools in the hands of trustees. Hence also the efforts to make municipal councils the imposers and collectors of rates for the support of separate schools on account of the reluctance of many of the rate payers concerned to pay the rates for the support of such schools, and in order to avoid the contact of church authority with them. Hence, likewise the efforts to get apportionments for the support of separate schools, not according to average attendance (which is the principle of apportionment adopted in regard to all the public schools) but according to the population of a whole religious persuasion. It therefore becomes every friend of general education and knowledge to protect our system of public instruction against these open and covert attempts to weaken and subvert it; and it becomes every friend of religious and civil liberty to aid in protecting individuals from all abridgement or invasion of their right of choice and action—an invasion which has assailed the highest personages in the legislature for the parliamentary exercise of their judgment and for the discharge of their duties as the responsible advisers of government for the whole people—an invasion which would prostrate the government and legislation of the country at the feet of hierarchical assumptions.

As it is the duty of the state to provide for the education of all the youth of the country, it ought

not to permit the legal exclusion of any portion of them from the fullest advantages of that provision without their having the benefit of teachers equally well qualified to teach as the teachers of the public schools, and schools and instruction equally efficient. But while teachers of the public schools have to be examined and licensed by a county board according to a programme prepared by the council of public instruction, the teachers of separate schools are subject to no such test of their qualifications, but are licensed by each set of trustees that employ them; and from the inferior qualifications of some of the teachers employed in them, and which must be the case more and more from their inadequate remuneration, and from their exemption from the examinations required of other teachers, it is to be feared that many children set off and assigned to the separate school suffer serious disadvantages in comparison with other children residing in the same neighbourhood:—apart from the disadvantage of their isolation, the salutary influence of the emulation and energy which arise from pursuing the same studies in connection with the youth of other classes in the community, and with whom they are to act and associate in future life. I think that adequate protection and security are not provided for the school education of the youth separated from the public schools without any choice and responsibility of their own: and it may yet be the duty of the legislature to look carefully into this subject. In the mean time, I believe there are some separate schools in which full justice is done to the secular branches of the education of the pupils.

The provision permitting the establishment of these schools in the School Act of 1841, was doubtless dictated by liberal and benevolent intentions; and from 1841 to 1850, it was attended with no discord and little or no evil, but was scarcely ever acted upon except in neighbourly odds where the imported feelings of transatlantic religious hostility prevented Protestants and Roman Catholics from availing themselves of the same schools. But since 1850, what was before requested as a favor and acted upon as an exception, has been demanded as a right and insisted upon as a system; and though the provisions of the law in regard to Separate Schools have been extended since 1850, every concession has been followed by a new demand, and every demand has been accompanied by a proposed measure, essentially different from the demand on which it was professedly founded, and which would, if acceded to, (as I have shown in my printed reports and correspondence of past years) have subverted our whole system of common school instruction. Had even the present separate school Act introduced near the end of the session at Quebec in 1855, been passed as it had been prepared, our public school system would now be broken up. Nor would the consequence be less fatal were the short Bill introduced into the Legislature Assembly this session, and entitled, “An Act to amend the Upper Canada Separate School Act of the year 1855,” to become a law. This bill is still pending; and it is authoritatively stated that the ecclesiastical authorities under whose auspices it was prepared and introduced, persist in demanding the passing of it under pain of the highest penalties they can inflict. Under such circumstances, it becomes my duty to notice this bill, that all parties may be aware of its character and tendency before the next session of the legislature. This bill consists of two sections, the first of which repeals the *twelfth* section of the Separate School Act;—the section which contains the conditions on which supporters of separate schools are exempted from the payment of municipal school