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THAT was a grand purpose to which Rev. Egerton Ryerson pledged himself on accepting office as the first Superintendent of Education for Ontario in 1844, "To provide for my native country a system of education, and facilities for intellectual improvement, not second to those of any country in the world." The form and loftiness of the promise marked the courage, individuality and conscious strength of the man who made it. The statue in the Toronto Normal School grounds, which was unveiled with appropriate ceremonies on the 24th inst., will henceforth stand as the testimony of the people of Ontario, especially of its teachers and others interested in educational work, to the faithfulness and ability with which the pledge was redeemed through thirty-two years of indefatigable toil and struggle. The artistically wrought monument in bronze will also serve as a fitting reminder to all who visit the Educational Department that the people of Ontario do not mean to let those who faithfully served their country in its earlier days be forgotten. A monument "more enduring than bronze" stands out to view wherever a free public school is efficiently doing its work in training the young of both sexes and of all classes to become intelligent and patriotic citizens of this growing commonwealth. Whether it be literally true or not that Dr. Ryerson "placed his native Province in the van of all the States of America and all the colonies of the British Empire," as the Minister of Education avouches, his plan was certainly comprehensive and statesmanlike, and was followed out with a courage, perseverance and success, for which the Province must ever remain his debtor.

DR. RYERSON had great faith in the moral as well as in the material results of a good system of free public schools. To those who objected that his proposal to empower trustees to erect school-houses wherever needed would be arbitrary and harsh, his answer was, the Minister of Education tells us, "School-houses are cheaper than gaols; teachers are cheaper than police officers; the taxpayer must be made to pay for the common morality of

the people." In common with other educational enthusiasts of his time, he perhaps expected too much from universal elementary education in the way of putting an end to vice and crime and uplifting whole communities. The standing complaint against the free-school system as it exists to-day is that it has not worked and is not working the great moral revolution anticipated. The standing problem in reference to the schools themselves is, How shall they be made the agencies of a more effective moral training than they have as yet given? There is undoubted cause for both the complaint and the enquiry. And yet, while we have brought graphically before us what the public school has not done, it is but too easy to lose sight of what it has done in the direction of moral reform. We have not before us Canadian or American statistics bearing upon the point, but some figures given by Sir John Lubbock, in a recent speech in England, are very significant and hopeful. Though England has not yet reached the goal of universal free schools, great progress has been made in this direction, while it is quite possible that in respect both to the moral element in the schools and the influence of free libraries and other agencies she may be in advance of this country and continent. Speaking on the influence of juvenile education in reducing juvenile crime, Sir John said: "In the last twenty years a great deal has been done to promote education, not only by schools but in various ways, and especially by Free Libraries, and the issue of cheap and good books. Now what has been the result? In 1856 the number of young persons committed for indictable offences was 14,000; in 1866 it has fallen to 10,000, in 1876 to 7,000, in 1881 to 6,000 and in 1886 to 5,100. And this though the population has risen from nineteen millions to twenty-seven millions, so that juvenile crime is less than half what it had been, though the number of children is one-third larger! Prison statistics are hardly less satisfactory. The average number of persons in prison, 21,000 in 1878, has dwindled to 14,500 in 1888. Indeed, our prison population is mainly recruited from those who cannot read. Out of 164,000 persons committed to prison no less than 160,000 were uneducated and only 4,000 were able to read and write well." The statistics in regard to pauperism were similarly hopeful, the average number of paupers having fallen from 46.5 per 1,000 in 1870 to 32 in 1880, and to 28, the lowest point yet reached, in 1888. Evidently the schoolmaster is both cheaper and more efficient than the constable, and the correctness of the theory which underlies free schools is amply demonstrated by facts.

THIS well deserved tribute, designed to recall to the public mind the person and work of the founder of the educational system in the Province, offers a fit and tempting occasion for placing the system, as conceived and partially wrought out by him, side by side with this same system as it now exists, and attempting to estimate the progress that has been made since Dr. Ryerson laid down the management. In many respects the improvement is great and striking. In the number and character of the schoolhouses and their equipments, in the standards of qualification set up for teachers, in the multiplied facilities for professional training, in the multiplication and excellence of the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes, and in many other respects the advance has been wonderful and admirable. But there are other very important aspects of the educational work in which it is far from clear that change has meant improvement. First, and we believe, in the opinion of many of our most thoughtful educators, worst, we have in place of an independent Superintendent a partizan—we use the term in no offensive sense—Minister of Education. Springing naturally, though not necessarily, from this root—the transfer of public education into the arena of party politics—are a number of minor educational evils, such as the selection of text-books virtually by an individual Minister instead of by a board of competent and disinterested educators; the partially successful attempt to introduce a rigid one-text-book system, without any sufficient guarantee that the one book chosen shall be in every case the best available; the substitution of a series of virtual and costly monopolies for the business principle of free competition in the publication of these text-books; and in general a marked tendency towards the inflexibility of a great machine

instead of the freedom and spontaneity of an adaptive living organism. If we are not greatly astray in this partial summary of what those best qualified to judge regard as the weak points in the present educational régime, it can be but a question of time when the people of Ontario will declare unmistakably in favour of a return to a non-political, or rather non-partisan, administration of their educational affairs.

THE mass meeting held a few weeks since at Laval University to protest against the Pope's deprivation of temporal power was in itself a trifling affair. One feels disposed to smile at the manifest disproportion between means and ends. The spectacle of a thousand French-Canadians solemnly declaring by resolution that the temporal power of the Papacy is equally necessary to the spiritual interests of the Church and to the material interests, peace and prosperity of States, is not one that is likely of itself to rouse even the Catholic nations of Europe to immediate action, much less to move the judgments and consciences of the Protestant Powers. Nevertheless the meeting was not without significance. Taken in connection with what is going on abroad, for example in the recent Roman Catholic congresses at Madrid and Vienna, it is a straw which shows very distinctly the direction in which the wind is blowing in Catholic communities the world over. There can be little doubt that earnest and concerted movements, or perhaps more strictly speaking, influences looking towards such movements, are now emanating from the Vatican and being brought to bear wherever Ultramontanism is strong, for the restoration of the Pope's temporal power. The project is undoubtedly a dream. Even Rome overrates her own importance if she believes that in the present state of Europe any great Power or combination of Powers would either wish or dare to espouse such a cause. It is a great pity, however, that other statesmen whose words are listened to by other nations as well as their own would not speak out on the subject as Mr. Gladstone has now done. If the Pope and his faithful millions could be convinced once for all that the case is hopeless, and that the Vatican can henceforth forever represent only a spiritual authority, the result would be most salutary in many ways. Mr. Gladstone boldly affirms in the *Nineteenth Century*, referring to the overthrow of the temporal power in 1870, that "the Italian Government would have been juridically justified in expelling the rival sovereign." At the same time he recognizes in words which imply his clear perception of the unreasonableness of the claim that "there is in most European countries a party which maintains the right of Roman Catholics, as such, to determine by what Government a portion of the Italian people shall be ruled."

THERE is truth and force in the saying that the best way to secure the repeal of a bad law is often to enforce it to the letter. On this principle the friends of religious voluntarism ought to feel grateful to Bishop Laféche, of Three Rivers, for the views he has enunciated in reference to the exemption of church property from municipal taxation. The Bishop takes the ground that the present law of exemptions does not go far enough. It is not a sufficient tribute from State to Church, in his estimation, that buildings and real estate belonging to the religious orders should be exempt only when actually used for religious purposes. "The law," he says, "ought to exempt from taxation all property, without exception, belonging to religious institutions engaged in works of charity or education, even to the property from which they derive an income." The audacity of the proposal has called forth a good deal of hostile comment. But is it so clear after all that Mgr. Laféche's contention is not logically sound? Why are church edifices and all other property exempted while in actual use for ecclesiastical purposes? Evidently because it is recognized that the religious and charitable work done by the churches and religious orders is a work for the good of the State. It helps to conserve the social order, to prevent vice and crime, to alleviate poverty and suffering. The exemption from taxes is the public contribution in aid of this work. Very good. But are not the churches supposed to hold all their possessions consecrated to one and the self-same end