

it will not help the cause of education. If the argument for the compulsory establishment of free schools depends on the progress that system has been making, that argument is destructive of the proposition as applied to cities, towns and villages, in which corporations the rate bill is increasing instead of diminishing. It is to be remarked, that in several of these rated schools, books and stationery are supplied to the pupils, and this system will be broken up under the present proposal. In my humble judgment it would be better—in order to get at that which we are all agreed is a desirable thing—a system of free schools—it would be better in those communities in which we find the rate bill increasing, to leave the matter to the operation of the present well-known laws, and not to say to the people—"you shall establish those schools now though you do not like the system." There is this to add, that you are not establishing, and cannot establish, a complete free school system throughout the country, because the Roman Catholic separate schools are protected under the Union Act, and in these schools, therefore, the rate bill may still be maintained.

With reference to compulsory education, my own opinion is, that, except perhaps in cities, this clause will not be found a living letter of the law. Even in cities to a large extent, and in counties almost entirely, the law will be a dead letter. I agree with the hon. member for Lincoln (Mr. Rykert) on the subject of perpetual imprisonment. This perpetual imprisonment clause is so outrageous, that I will assume it to be an error, and pass it by. It must be struck out, and other changes must be made. The right of home education must be recognized. My opinion is, that we can get as high a degree of education as is procurable under any compulsory system, by judicious management and a liberal expenditure of money in connection with our present Common School system. I do not believe that our population is indifferent to school education. I am proud to believe that, from year to year, the desire for education will increase, and that it will be regarded as a badge of shame that a parent does not send his children to school. The man who neglects to do so, is just the man you cannot force by saying, "you shall pay a fine or go to jail." I have made some investigations on this subject, and it is highly satisfactory to say that, as a general rule, in the lately settled districts, where the parents were at first poor, and unable either to provide for schools, or to deprive themselves of the little aid of their children, the attendance of the children at schools, notwithstanding various drawbacks, has largely increased. In the County, one of whose Ridings I have the honour to represent, the increase since the last census is quite disproportionate to