

nable to the present system, and in making the law work. But as this majority wish to bring over the minority, little by little, to more healthy views, they display their prudence in not wishing to exercise all the rigor of the law. They must not be blamed. The present system would be nearly sufficient if it were put into execution with zeal. It appears to me that to be a School Commissioner under present circumstances, no one ought to be eligible as such, unless he knew how to read and write properly, and unless he first bound himself in writing to maintain the present system with all his power. The penalties imposed by law against negligent commissioners, or representing either a majority or a strong refractory minority, can never compensate for the want of zeal.

*Answer to Question No. 24.*—There is no cause peculiar to this locality, other than that mentioned in the answer No. 14, which appears to me to have embarrassed or to embarrass at present the cause of education. But there is a general cause, the effects of which will still exist for some time, to which may be attributed the present slowness in the progress of elementary education. It is the nearly absolute ignorance of the mass of the people, caused by the sectarian policy and avowed proselytism of the administration of the Provincial Government, from the cession of the Province by France to Great Britain up to 1825. How could the descendants of four generations of men, kept in ignorance, know the advantages of education? How can they be induced to make the necessary and indispensable sacrifices to obtain a thing of which they do not know the want, of which they do not feel the utility? Without otherwise incriminating a deplorable state of things, but which does not now exist, we must limit ourselves to repairing the evil. It is only time, patience, and larger grants from the public treasury than those that are now made that can remedy it, and put an end to a state of ignorance of which the population themselves are not the cause.

When we consider that before 1832 the annual expenses incurred by the Province of Lower Canada, have sometimes exceeded £80,000 for the encouragement of education; that since then, the population has more than doubled; that since the union of the two Canadas, the allowance for elementary education is but £50,000 for the two Provinces united, can it be a matter of surprise to us that the purely legislative provisions on this so important subject have not produced more advantageous results.

*J. Bte. Desrosiers, Esquire, (St. Hugues):*

1. The system of primary instruction, although it has not yet attained the object held in view by the legislators and the friends of education, has nevertheless, in the greatest number of localities, produced results sufficiently satisfactory to make us augur well for the future. The opposition to the law does not certainly proceed from a defect in the law, and ought not to prevent our seeing it work with full success when the popular prejudices shall have all been done away with.

2. In casting a glance on the past, we have seen that in the places where the first citizens have employed their influence in aid of the cause of education, there it has done good and promised much; and also that in the places where the opposition to the law has been most strong and most general, we have been able to discover that the bad popular passions have been worked upon by certain individuals who used that means to acquire popularity. Our primary schools have then, for the most part, done what they could do under the circumstances in which the people were; who, deprived of the means of appreciating education, had, besides, the greatest repugnance towards a direct tax, which they considered to be the commencement of a more extensive system. Happily this error has entirely ceased to exist.