

demanded? It seemed to be pretty generally avowed that the change was sought for, (making the reading of the Scriptures and instruction from them compulsory on all the children attending the schools,) not with reference to the Religious Education of children belonging to the [former] Established Church, but with the view of affording Religious Instruction to children who did not belong to that Communion. They were told that many of the Clergy and Members of the [former] Established Church in Ireland could not conscientiously give secular education to any children unless, at the same time, they were permitted to impart Religious Instruction to them; and, as they objected to any School System, from which the reading of the Scriptures were excluded, they disapproved of the Rules of the Irish National Board of Education. He believed the assertion that the Scriptures were excluded from the National Schools in Ireland was altogether unfounded, for the Scriptures might be used in every National School in the Country, provided their study was not enforced as a necessary condition of admission. In his opinion the opposition of Clergy of the [former] Established Church in Ireland to the National System of Education was from false pride, and from a feeling of annoyance at finding themselves placed, under that System, upon a footing of fair equality with Clergymen of other Religious Denominations. That opposition arose from a sincere, but, as he thought, from a mistaken sense of duty, which led Clergy of the [former] Church Establishment to refuse their countenance to any System of Education, which did not enable them to instruct the children in the doctrines of their own Church. It could not be supposed that the great Presbyterian Church of Ireland, who almost equalled in numbers the [former] Established Church, entertained less reverence for the Scriptures than any other Body of Protestants; yet they had faithfully and frankly accepted the Irish National System of Education. He had heard it said, that special advantages had been afforded to Presbyterians, in order to secure their adherence to the National System; but they possessed no privileges which were not equally extended to all other Religious Denominations. As soon as the Presbyterians were satisfied that, under the rules of the National Board, they could give full Religious Instruction to children of their own Communion, they at once adopted the National System. He could not think, however, that the conduct of the Clergy and Members of the [former] Established Church had arisen from such conscientious scruples as that House would be disposed to regard, but rather in the false position in which the [former] Established Church was placed, and from the unfounded claims to religious supremacy, which were put forward on its behalf. He hoped, therefore, that the House, while it would be disposed to pay the utmost respect to conscientious scruples, would not listen to the claim urged on behalf of a portion of the Clergy and Laity of the Irish Church by the Right Honourable gentleman opposite, (Mr. Walpole). He believed if there ever was a body of men who were able to make some sacrifices for their conscientious convictions, and to endure some privations on account of their religious scruples, it was the [former] Established Church of Ireland, which numbered among its supporters a large proportion of the Landed Proprietors, and enjoyed the whole of the ecclesiastical Revenues of the Country. He trusted the day would come when the Clergy of the [lately] Established Church in Ireland would change their minds and co-operate in making the National School System in Ireland a still greater blessing than it ever was. The House would see that the proposal made by the Right Honourable gentleman, (Mr. Walpole), the other night, was a direct reversal of those fundamental principles which had been the salvation and essence of the National System of Education in Ireland. Believing that those principles were incompatible with the proposition of the Right Honourable gentleman, (Mr. Walpole), and that they would, in effect, exclude the adoption of his Resolution, when he would, at all events, have the effect of quieting the mind of the people of Ireland, he trusted that his, (Mr. Fortescue's), motion would receive the support of the House, being assured that, as long as that House and the Government acted upon the principles contained in his Resolution, there would be no fear of the stability of that great System of Education, which had conferred such incalculable blessings upon Ireland."

The Honourable gentlemen concluded by moving the Resolution, above quoted, and which, after an elaborate discussion, was adopted by the House of Commons without a division,—thus approving in the strongest manner, by the vote of both the Protestant and Roman Catholic Members of Parliament, and, after an experience of twenty-three years, the System of National Schools in Ireland, and refusing any essential modification of it.

7. I have made these quotations, in reference to the principles on which the National Schools are conducted in Ireland, because they are the same as those on which the Public Schools in Upper Canada are conducted, with this difference, that the hour, or hours, for Denominational Religious Instruction for each week is not stated, or provided for, in the Canadian Schools. In Ireland it is left to the Local Patrons to fix the time each week, either "during school hours or otherwise." This can be easily provided for in our School System by the Council of Public Instruction; but the practical utility of it is doubtful, as few of the Clergy would be able to meet the children of their Religious Persuasion each week in each School, and the Catechetical and other Religious Instruction which the Clergy would thus give to the children of their Persuasion in each School is, for the most part, otherwise provided to be given to them in Sunday Schools, or in connection with the Sunday Services. In Ireland, the National Schools are for the poor; in Canada, they are for the whole population, and the Patrons, or Trustees, of Canadian Schools are elected by all the landholders, or resident householders. The Clergy of all Religious Persuasions are Visitors of the Schools, and can visit them at their convenience. The Teachers are examined and licensed by County Boards, appointed for that purpose, and such Teachers must furnish satisfactory proof of good moral character. This is a better test than that of their merely being members, or adherents, of particular Religious Persuasions, since they may be such, and yet not be either temperate, or