

in the most unmistakable way. The right to a good, thorough English education is recognized by the Constitution of the Province of Ontario as the birthright of every citizen, irrespective of creed, and, as I understand public sentiment, no Government could long exist that ignored, much less repudiated, this right. (Applause.) What are the charges in detail? First, it is said that under the Public Schools Act every ratepayer was presumably a Public School supporter; now because of our action, if such ratepayer be a Roman Catholic, he is presumably a Separate School supporter. Even if this presumption were true, it would only apply to municipalities in which Separate Schools are established, or to 193 out of a total of 710 municipalities in the Province. But let us see what the law is in this matter. If there were no Separate School in the municipality or within three miles of it, this part of the Assessor's duty would count for nothing. I am aware that the Public School Trustees of Toronto, who have shown such wonderful zeal in the maintenance of the Public School system, required the parents and guardians of children attending the city schools to sign a declaration

THAT THEY WERE PROTESTANTS,

and that their children were vaccinated before admitting them to the Public Schools of the city. (Laughter.) Whether the vaccination referred to meant inoculation with those high Tory principles which usually culminate in wordy declarations on the 12th of July and then subside into subserviency to the will of the chieftain on election day, I cannot say. (Cheers and laughter.) But the declaration is likely at all events to be withdrawn or modified as at once illegal and in direct violation of the letter and spirit of the School Act. The School Law never intended to divide and does not now divide the people of Ontario into two camps. Any division that takes place is still left to the free, unfettered choice of the parties concerned. (Hear, hear.) But what is the argument used by our opponents in this case? They say, quoting Section 48 of the Separate Schools Act, (1) "That the Assessors shall in the assessment roll set down the religion of the ratepayer, distinguishing between Catholic and Protestant, and whether a supporter of Public or Separate Schools, and (2) that the Assessor shall accept the statement of, or made on behalf of, any ratepayer that he is a Roman Catholic, as sufficient *prima facie* evidence for placing such person in the proper column of the assessment roll for Separate School supporter; and (3) if the Assessor knows personally any ratepayer to be a Roman Catholic, this shall be sufficient for placing him in such last mentioned column." And having quoted the statute as I have just done,