

SOME OF THE COMMON RIGHTS INVOLVED.

As this claim of the "rights of conscience" actually involves the whole question at issue, its present consideration is fortunately forced upon the people and rulers of the Province; as by ignoring or postponing it, and committing the Government to what is inherently wrong, an inevitable and irrepressible conflict, unless averted, will be likely sooner or later to imperil the highest interests of the state.

In these Provinces, as regarding the "rights of conscience," no superior claim can, for a moment, be conceded to any man or sect of men over another. In matters of conscience, there are here no majorities or minorities. The rights of one man are as dear to him as those of a thousand, and must be equally respected and secured.

If any such pretended claim were to be set up by any organization, it might seem to be put forth with some little shadow of plausibility by the churches of England and Scotland, as being the established churches of the realm. But these and all other churches are, ostensibly at least, equal under the constitution and before the law of Canada, and it is evidently for their own and the general welfare that they be and remain so, *de facto*.

The Roman Catholic authorities reply: We are not claiming superiority by law over other churches; we are only asking to be allowed to establish and control separate Catholic schools in Upper, as well as in Lower Canada.

On the other hand, Protestants and other non-Catholics (Israelites and others) maintain that no such right can consistently be claimed by Catholics, and ought not to be conceded to them or any other sect. If it be granted to one body, it must, in common fairness, be conceded to all who desire it,—a thing which would be essentially wrong, impolitic, and even impracticable.

Many English Churchmen, Kirkmen, and others, believe as firmly in doctrinal instruction in the day-schools as do Roman Catholics; but, for the common good, they are mostly willing to forego what they would consider a great advantage to their families and their respective churches; and they justly ask Roman Catholics to make the same compromise to promote the peace and welfare of the whole Province.

To allow Catholics to establish schools, to be supported in whole, or even in part, by the *public revenues*, for the daily inculcation of Roman Catholic doctrines, is actually to appropriate money, paid by people of all denominations, to build up and perpetuate the Roman Catholic Church, and is but an indirect way of obtaining state aid and *quasi* state recognition for that church.

Most non-Catholics would prefer to have the *public money* go directly for the priests' salaries; for 300 priests ordinarily could not accomplish as much as 3,000 teachers giving *daily* instruction, under the direction and control of the hierarchy, in nearly all that pertains to the Roman Catholic faith.

Nay more, Protestants are not willing that the taxes and revenues, derived chiefly from them, should be given by government to inculcate