

the whole system. It cannot be pretended, as the *Minerve* tried to make out in explanation of facts which could not be denied, that there is an essential difference between the mental characteristics of the French and the Anglo Saxon race; that the one is theoretical and the other practical. Such an assumption is at variance with the history of inventions, and with the result of the labours and efforts of both races in the application of scientific discovery to practical uses. It would be absurd to attempt to enter upon any enumeration of these, even had we space, and it is besides unnecessary as the facts are easily accessible. But there is no need to resort to such an argument to prove the fallacy of the statement that French Canadians are mentally disqualified from entering into competition with their fellow-countrymen of other origins. They have shown whenever they have had an opportunity, an aptitude for acquiring knowledge of the useful arts which has enabled them to take a leading position, and it may be asserted with the utmost confidence that they are kept back and heavily weighted in the race for life, and that the whole country suffers from a vicious system. If the object to be attained is the education of the whole people, then, undoubtedly, there has been a complete and lamentable failure. And the cause of this, it is impossible to deny, is a sectarian system of schools.

How, then, are better results to be obtained in the future than in the past? Is it by extending still further the denominational system? By having Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Methodist and Congregational schools? By dividing the grant among a dozen of different sects, so that each one is starved and the schools rendered inefficient? Our denominational schools have kept apart the various sections of the population and have kept and are still keeping us as a heterogeneous mass instead of a homogeneous people. Take it for granted that the advantages to be derived from the recent change in the law, as far as regards Montreal, are all that they are said to be, how will this affect the rest of the Province? That in the face of restricted means the Commissioners have done the amount of good they have been able to effect is worthy of all praise. That with a larger sum to some small extent adequate to the task of supporting schools in a proper state, of increasing facilities for higher education, and of preparing the young for entering on a collegiate course, the good to be effected will be largely increased, who can doubt

that knows the energy and ability with which the operations of the Commissioners have been hitherto conducted. But what will be the effect throughout the country of the statement that the Commissioners are determined to conduct the schools on Protestant principles, a statement which Mr. Chaveau was not slow to take advantage of? The first effect of the formation of a Committee in Montreal to promote Protestant education in Lower Canada was the concession of the right of separate schools in Upper Canada, contrary, as has been since unmistakably shown, to the wishes of Roman Catholics themselves. The recent declaration will have the effect of establishing the claims of the Romish priesthood to the entire control of the schools of the majority. For years we have consistently maintained that a Common School system of education should be established, open to the whole community and supported by the public money. In no other way can the blessings of education be extended to every child in the country. Now the question is renewed from that broad ground and made to assume the appearance of a scramble between rival religious sects for the possession of public money to propagate their own peculiar tenets. It is so on the one side, we do not believe it is so on the other, but on the surface this is made to appear to be the real question at issue. Catholics desire to obtain the best education possible for their children, and even now some of them, notwithstanding the natural desire to please their ecclesiastical authorities, send their children to the Commissioners' schools. Is the conspicuous affixing of the name "Protestant" to what should be "Common" schools likely to encourage a larger influx of Roman Catholic scholars? Or will it not rather deter even those most anxious for the due preparation of their children for the business of life from acting in open violation of the orders of the Church to which they belong, when they see a name given to these schools symbolical of all they have been taught to look upon as most to be avoided?

We shall be told, undoubtedly, that to expect the Church of Rome to recede from the position she has taken on this question is an idle dream. It may be so, we have no doubt it is so. Yet, granting this to the fullest extent, clearly comprehending the task set before those who have made up their minds to have a national system of education, we maintain that we are justified in the course we have taken. Let us lay down sound principles. Let us say at once