

then to one of our most prominent Toronto Public Schools ; both schools in the same system. Will he say that the education there is exactly the same? No ; but he will reply that Toronto can afford to spend more money on education than a School section in Muskoka. Well and good ! then why not apply the same principle to the Municipality or School section you would apply to the Province, and in doing so give parents who desire it an opportunity to supplement and improve the education of their children by Voluntary enterprise and still remain part of the national system of public education. Principal Grant, of Queen's University, contends that one of the drawbacks of the land to-day was the *crave for uniformity* in the common education. The editor of the *Presbyterian Review* also makes reference to a retort that Voluntary Schools exist in the United States, and refers to the decision of the Honorable Charles R. Skinner, Superintendent in the Department of Public Instruction in the State of New York. This reference leads one to a most interesting practical illustration of the question of Voluntary Schools. It would appear that in the City of Poughkeepsie the following plan has been in working order for upwards of twenty-three years. Buildings were rented from the religious bodies. In the case particularly in point at a nominal rent of \$1.00 a year. During school hours no religious instruction was imparted to the children. The Public Board of Education seems to have simply accepted the teachers of the religious body to act as Public School teachers in this particular school and their salaries were paid in the ordinary course by the Board. After these many years of practical operation an objection to this school was raised by the appeal of one Edward Keyser. The chief and apparently only ground for his objection was based on the denominational in-

fluence of the school, arising from the use of a particular dress worn by the teaching community. Objection was also made to the fact that a cross stood on the top of the building in which the school was carried on. I draw particular attention to these details to show that the objection was not against the general principles upon which such schools can be carried on, but on account of the objection raised by this man to the religious tendency of the school. The Superintendent's decision to be in accord with the Statute Law of the State was against this school. In other words the State system must be absolutely intolerant of religion, and this in a land boasting of its religious freedom.

As a part of the consideration of this whole question it is interesting to watch the discussions and to note the objections raised in the press from time to time in reference to our Public School system. In a recent issue of the *Mail and Empire* a report was given of an interview with Mr. John Douglas, the new Chairman of the Toronto School Board. In this interview he states that he believes in making the work in the Public Schools simple and thorough. He would exclude from the curriculum the following four subjects : algebra, geometry, physics and botany. "My position is," he states, "that the Public Schools should give an English education, *not especially adapted for any particular walk in life*, but as soon as a student wishes to prepare himself for any special calling his parents or guardians should be required to bear a portion of the expense. . . . My theory would be that the Education Act should be amended so as to provide that the four subjects to which I have adverted should not be taught *compulsorily* in the Public Schools." Here we find a Chairman of the Toronto School Board an ardent advocate of the Voluntary principle. He states