

which has ever been attained by any community has been very far short of what may be and will be attained.

STATE SUPERINTENDED EDUCATION A NECESSITY.

In view of the fact that democratic government presupposes the intelligence of the whole people, it is obvious that, in order to maintain or increase its success, careful provision must be made for the education of the people. This necessity is so self-evident that it has been recognized by all the more enlightened and progressive peoples. Experience has shown that the safety of a democratic state demands that it shall take measures to ensure to all its citizens at least the elements of a liberal education. This can be efficiently accomplished only by the establishment of a system of education under the direct supervision or control of the state. A little reflection will show the enormously increased efficiency in the education of a people which may be secured when the arrangements and regulations are made on a community-wide scale, and are embodied in the laws.

The necessity for the education of the people in self-governing communities has been admitted even by those who, it is to be suspected, on grounds of interest and inclination would refuse to make the admission, but for the fact that the soundness of the proposition is self-evident. Those individuals, or corporations, or classes, who enjoy special privileges, and who desire that these shall be continued, can have no sincere desire for the education of the people, or for the development of the power of original thought, or the exercise of independent judgment by the mass. The modern movement in the direction of public education under the supervision of the state, has been opposed and obstructed by various interests and for various ostensible reasons. But in all countries in which free state education has been introduced, the obstruction and resistance which have been found to be the most strenuous and most formidable, have emanated from, and been inspired by, the ecclesiastics of certain religious denominations, and of these the Church of Rome has been, beyond all comparison, the most important, whether considered from the point of view of the uncompromising attitude it assumes, or from the solid homogeneity of

the body of citizens whose action it directs and controls. It is unnecessary here to rehearse the reasons why in a self-governing community, composed of heterogeneous elements, no relationship is possible between the state and any particular religious denomination. These reasons will suggest themselves. For the same reasons which render it impossible for a democratic state to recognize any particular church or denomination, it is impossible to permit of the teaching of any of the distinctive denominational dogmas or doctrines in the state schools.

But the Roman Catholic church declares that any system of education, in which its distinctive dogmas are not taught, and in which its claims to recognition as the sole repository of revealed truth are not admitted, is an imperfect and a dangerous system. It will be seen later whether those contentions of the Church of Rome are sound, and whether they are supported by the facts of history or by current experience. At present we shall confine ourselves to a statement of the position of the church. It will be seen that, on account of its attitude on this question a really national or common system of schools is an impossibility in a community in which there are any Catholic citizens if their contentions are admitted. If Roman Catholics may claim exemption from the operation of any law of any state of which they are subjects or citizens, on the ground that conformity on their part to the law would be incompatible with certain conscientious convictions of theirs, why may not the Jew, the Quaker or the Mormon claim with equal right a like exemption? If the soundness of the claim of the Roman Catholics is admitted that of the others cannot be logically denied. But if the general principle is admitted, and all the sects should make the claim, it is clear that no general system could be instituted. It may be urged, as it has indeed already been urged by implication, on behalf of the Roman Catholics, that the other sects do not make any such claims, and that even if they did, their claims would be based on mere "isolated or eccentric opinion." The flimsiness of such an argument, however, is palpable, because if conscience is admitted to be a reasonable basis of claim to exemption, the number of the individuals who may entertain the conscientious objection to the law, obviously cannot be a factor in the case.

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