

by the assessors; and in default of payment to be collected under and subject to the provisions of the Chapter of the revised statutes "Of County assessments," and of any acts in amendment thereof, and such assessors shall return such assessment to the general sessions or to any special sessions held for that purpose, when appeals shall be had and determined. And when, in accordance with the instructions and regulations of the Council of Public Instruction, the school-house or houses in any district shall be declared unfit for use by the School Commissioners, the trustees shall be authorized to raise the sum required for the building by assessment on the real and personal property of the inhabitants of the district.

Here, we have a tax levied by a *show of hands*, upon men possessing real or personal property! We have at different times heard a good deal about rich men making laws for the poor, but here we find poor men called upon to tax the rich. Let us suppose that the report of the trustees represents the school funds in need of but trifling assistance—say twenty pounds; can there be any doubt as to the decision of the majority regarding the best means of raising such a sum? Unless we greatly miscalculate human instincts, a majority would declare in favor of subscription. Men do not, as a rule, tax themselves more than they can help, nor do they tax themselves at all, so long as others are willing to be taxed for them. Who would vote for assessment, when money could be raised by subscription? But, supposing the subscription scheme falls to the ground, into whose hands does the power of taxation fall? Into the hands of a majority of rate payers, as represented by three assessors chosen from their midst! The working of such a system is obvious. A gentleman employs—say, twenty men, and the latter are enabled to become rate payers by reason of their employer's liberality. A general meeting is duly advertised, the report of the trustees is handed in, and a small sum is required for school support. Three assessors are elected by a majority of those employed as above stated, and the collector is sent round the section, cap in hand. If he be a wise man, he will visit one or more wealthy employers, and thus save himself the trouble of calling upon those for whose direct interest the tax is levied. The wealthy employers have probably no personal interest in the school which they are called upon to maintain; the benefits of the district school are shared by the men in their employ, but the latter are not necessarily called upon to support such a school.

We think the Council of Instruction would do well to reconsider paragraph 26, of the Education Act, prior to the 1st of next May. It would be most unwise to try and carry out a law obnoxious to the majority of the people, when by a little trouble on the part of the Council, the Education Act could be materially improved. As at present constituted, it is to be feared that those in whose hands power will be placed, may not be exactly the men best fitted for the important task of taxing their fellow men. It would seem, indeed, as though the Council had calculated upon such a contingency, when framing the following paragraph:—"If any trustee shall sign a false return tending to procure for the section an undue share of the public aid, he shall forfeit the sum of twenty dollars." The forfeiture is hardly in keeping with the crime, supposing the trustees men of any social status. We are of opinion that the high-handed views put forth as an advertisement in every paper but this, will go far to alienate the people from the existing Administration.

CANADA AND FEDERATION.

That the existing scheme for the Federation of British North America is doomed to destruction few we imagine will deny. New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island have

already declared most strongly against it. The possibility however that Nova Scotia alone may in after ages be accused of having accepted it is greatly to be feared. If things are allowed to go on as at present, our province will deserve the stigma attaching to a people who allow themselves to be wheedled by their politicians into a scheme which they at heart abhor. This censure will be deserved if all discussion on the subject is confined to the press. The two leading political journals are naturally in favor of a scheme agreed to by their directors. Many other journals—facetiously, and we will hope incorrectly,—termed by the great daily organ "subsidized tri-weeklys" follow in hot haste upon their steps, whilst others again are hesitatingly dumb upon the subject. Nova Scotians however must not be drowned by a gush of honeyed words. That the scheme is impossible we have already observed, and the only object we now have in view is to save Nova Scotians from the imputation of having given their assent, through their politicians, to a scheme, which the mass rejects as absurd.

Perhaps the most charming feature in the arrangement is its Janus like character. It resembles Mr. FAUCONBERG'S WAYS. It is denounced as too Legislative in Lower Canada, which province we shall be told alone stood in the way of a Legislative Union, and it is cried down as too Federal in Nova Scotia which professes to desire a Legislative Union, if any at all is to be obtained. The extreme possibility of the Scheme acts however in another way. Its two faces provide answers to objections of all kinds. The politicians who constructed it cannot be accused by those desirous of Federation, of propounding a purely Legislative Scheme; nor can the well wishers of a Legislative Union declaim against the result of the conference as too Federal in its design. Those who cry out for a Legislative Union are told that such an Union is before them, and vice versa, those who consider Federation the safest course are referred to the powers vested in the Local Parliaments as a proof that it is really a Federation of the Provinces which is in contemplation. We shall be told in fact that it is a compromise, and that all great improvements have been compromises. Without denying the general statement we must remark that there are situations in which compromise is impossible. To talk of a compromise between an evenly matched lion and tiger is absurd; nor would matters be much mended by the introduction of a muskwash into the arena. It is no compromise for the muskwash. He may divert the wild beasts' attention for five seconds and be snapped up at once, or he may have to wait till the battle royal is over and be then quietly devoured by the victor. The politicians of Upper and Lower Canada having brought things to a deadlock by their quarrels see a chance of breathing time if they can persuade the Lower provinces to join a scheme of their own concoction. The politicians of the latter fall into the snare and preach claptrap about a great nation only bounded by the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, whilst the very cause for establishing this great nation is the inability of the two Canadas to remain united. And then we are told that it is a compromise—which indeed it may be between the politicians of Upper and Lower Canada—and the best scheme which could be effected. That indeed is quite possible. Considering the causes which led to its birth we are only astonished that it is not worse. Nova Scotia desires no compromise. Nova Scotia could make up her mind as to the kind of union which would best suit her interests. The people of this Province could make up their minds fast enough on the subject, but they are not willing to enter a union which is caused by disunion. Their faith in such a scheme is naturally weak. When we look at the arguments which are daily poured forth in favor of

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