

Schools and Religion.

SCHOOL SYSTEM OF THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

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The school system of Quebec is essentially religious. This is easily understood as to the 4,886 Roman Catholic schools. It is also true as to the 1,002 Protestant schools. Protestantism favorably affects Romanism by a stimulus to a higher type of school. Romanism favorably affects Protestantism by a conspicuous emphasizing of the religious element. With this element in education the administrative personnel of Protestant schools is decidedly and unanimously in sympathy. This is not by law, but by deliberate preference. I know of no law to prevent the Protestant Committee of the Council of Public Instruction making their schools absolutely secular if they wished. Yet in the Protestant schools of Quebec, religion is more prominent than in the schools of any other province.

The object of the editor of the "Journal" in eliciting information as to religion in the schools of Quebec will probably be served by a brief study of (1) the history of the system, (2) its present organization, (3) the protection of the minority, and (4) the work being done.

1. In 1639 the first school in Canada was established in connection with the Ursuline Convent at Quebec. In 1657 the Seminary of St. Sulpice was founded in Montreal, and in 1668, the Petit Seminaire, under Bishop Laval, was founded in Quebec, ultimately developing into the Laval University in 1854. In 1801 the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning was established for the diffusion of education. Its work is now confined to McGill University, founded in 1828. As this organization was decidedly English and Protestant, the Fabrique Act was passed in 1824 to establish Roman Catholic schools in the different parishes.