

hoped the Christian and patriotic spirit of the Legislature, in passing the law, will be imitated by all parties entrusted with its execution. While the several religious denominations possess equal facilities for the special religious instruction of their own youth, there is a wide common ground of principles and morals, held equally sacred, and equally taught by all, and the spirit which ought to pervade the whole system of Public Instruction, and which comprehend the essential requisites of social happiness and good citizenship.

There is another principle which can scarcely be considered of less importance than the foregoing. If differences of religious opinion should not, in any way, disturb the harmony, or weaken the energy of united action in the work of Educational instruction, much less should differences of opinion on civil matters. Whatever diversity of opinion and of interest there may be in other questions, it may be assumed that on the subject of educating the Youth of the Country, there exists but one opinion, and that there should, therefore, be but one party. The want to be supplied, and the object to be accomplished, is commensurate with the energies and resources of the entire community. The absence of all sectional feeling, and the accordant feeling of all parties in the Legislature, in passing all the general provisions of the Law, is indicative of the enlightened and noble feeling which, I trust, will characterize all the deliberations and proceedings which may take place in its administration. It is not improbable that experience may suggest modifications and improvements in the present School Act, as well as in the preceding Acts of the same kind; but it is only by experience that such enactments can be perfected in any country.

A third principle which lies at the foundation of the School Law, and which it is important to keep in view is, that the system of Elementary Instruction is *public* and not *private*: that is, that it not only receives support from the Public Treasury, but is, in all its parts, under the regulation of the law of the land. The people of the Province, through their Representatives, provide the means, and prescribe the conditions and regulations under which such aid shall be given to each District and Section; and the object of Provincial oversight, and District Superintendence, is not to do what local efforts can and are better adapted to accomplish, but to guard the Provincial liberality from any local misapplication, and to supply the deficiency of local means of information, and to assist and encourage local exertion. In contradistinction to the isolation of a Private School, each Common School is a component part of a Provincial whole; and, as such, participates in the common benefit and is subject to the common regulations. The