

# THE PRESBYTERIAN.

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At the present moment, the question of education is one of the greatest importance; and the true solution of our difficulties, with regard to the Common School system, is so desirable, and in fact necessary, that we have returned to the subject. Suggestions have been given from various quarters, through the newspaper press and by pamphlet; among others one entitled "Remarks on the New Separate School Agitation," by the Chief Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada. From its direct bearing on the question of Education in Lower Canada, we would strongly recommend this pamphlet to the consideration of all interested in the progress of national education.

Even in Lower Canada, considerable misapprehension exists as to the true bearings of the question at issue. The real ground of difference has been lost sight of, and the Romish hierarchy have, by every means possible, endeavoured, and only too successfully, to make it a question of creed. The committee lately formed to advocate the claims of non-catholic schools, have thus, by stating that their object is the protection of *Protestant* education in Lower Canada, given up the vantage ground which they should have occupied. The question is not one between Protestants and Roman Catholics. It is something very different. The parties to this struggle, are, on the one hand, the advocates for education to all classes, creeds and nationalities, by a system of common schools free from all sectarian influences; and on the other, a serried phalanx of priests and ecclesiastics who seek to prevent the establishment of common schools. The very name, *Common Schools*, sufficiently indicates the object sought to be attained by their establishment. In a country like Canada, wherein so great a diversity of

religious opinions exists, such a scheme was the only one practicable, and it is therefore very evident that, if it is to be carried out in good faith, schools in which sectarian teaching is enforced, have no claim whatever to the title of Common Schools. That very fact places them in the class of dissentient or separate schools. Numbers have nothing to do with it. Whether the dissentients constitute the majority or minority in a town, village, or municipality, does not alter their character as dissentients from the Common School system. If this view be correct, and we believe it is, then it follows that the present Superintendent of Education for Lower Canada, arrogates to himself a position to which he is not entitled, he being, in strict law, merely at the head of a large number of dissentient or separate schools. The fact of his being a Roman Catholic, does not prevent Mr. Chauveau or any other individual from holding the office of Superintendent of Education. That office was created in order to carry out the Common School system; and a Roman Catholic, who is appointed to that office, cannot be objected to on the score of his religion, in this country, where no civil disabilities flow from a man's creed. But if a Superintendent, in direct opposition to the whole spirit of the law as contained in the Statute Book, uses his office to encourage separate schools, and to oppose by every means, the efficient working out of the system which he was appointed to superintend, and the prosperity of which it was intended he should promote, then, and in that case, he has no longer any right to retain an office, the duties of which he does not comprehend or fulfil.

What injustice would be done to Roman Catholics by carrying out the law in the manner contemplated by its framers? None whatever. The Common School law, *carried out in good faith*, gives to dissentients every security that they will receive the full amount per head to which they are