

vernment can in accordance with their duty—to meet the objection which is felt to anything like taxation, we should take another step in advance. And whilst providing the means to render this mode of supporting schools as little obnoxious to the public mind as is practicable, we believe that it would be unworthy of ourselves if we refrained from pursuing a course that will secure to a still greater extent the operation of free schools throughout the Province. In order to do that, and at the same time meet the feeling of the people on the principle of assessment, the government have decided to go further in the direct contribution which shall be given from the treasury of the country to the common schools. A great step, as everybody is aware, was taken at this last session, and the amount granted to common schools was enormously increased, but the Government think that they may safely, in relation to so important a branch of the public service, go further, and relieve the people, as far as direct taxation is concerned, to a much larger extent than they did in the measure of last year. The amount under the old law was \$45,080 for common schools, and \$6,500 for the grammar schools, or \$51,580 in all. The Government proposed last year, and the House sanctioned, a very large advance upon that sum, but we shall ask the Legislature under this bill, to double actually the amount which under the old law was given from the revenue in support of schools. The fact that the Government are the Council of Public Instruction, enables them to feel, not in that remote manner that is the case when the business goes through a subordinate department, but directly whenever there is any friction, whenever there is any difficulty encountered in working the law. In this way we are in a position to know what the public sentiment is, and what are the difficulties, to an extent that we could not possibly, if the council were differently constituted. If there is any one feeling which is especially popular throughout the Province in relation to the maintenance of common schools, it is that the government should resort to as large an extent as is possible to indirect taxation for that purpose. Therefore, yielding to that feeling and sentiment, the Government have decided to draw, as largely as they can, the means for the support of common schools from the treasury; but having taken that great step in advance, we also propose to ask the Legislature to go still further ahead, and impose a direct assessment on the people of Nova Scotia, from one end to the other, to supplement the provincial grant, and provide such a fund as will make provision for a school in every section. It is therefore proposed to levy a county assessment upon every county in Nova Scotia for two-thirds of the amount which is contributed directly from the treasury of the country. Having increased so enormously from the treasury the means for the education of the people, I do trust that the house will be disposed to assist the government in respect to what is the fundamental principle of the bill, and that intelligent men of all classes and parties will be ready to contribute a limited amount by assessment for the support of schools all over the face of this country.—I may be asked why the county has been substituted for the section. Under the existing law, suppose two sections adopt the principle of assessment in order to have efficient schools.

You may see two farms, each worth £500, alongside of each other, though in different sections, and whilst the owner of one may be taxed \$10, the other may be put down at \$20. The fact is, that the amount required for the support of schools in one section is what governs the section, and therefore these two individuals, although neither of them may have any direct interest in the school, are so unequally taxed. When it was found that such was the operation of the act, the mode to which I have alluded has been arranged as one that will be more equitable—as one recognizing the principle that the property of the county should provide for the education of the county and that the amount so levied should be distributed equally and fairly according to the necessities of the county and the condition of the schools that are supported in each section.

The mode in which the money from the treasury will be distributed will be this:—Whilst we propose to have seven inspectors, with salaries, we shall at the same time pursue a course that will enable us to save the entire amount required for their payment. Instead of sending the grant to the counties and allowing the inspectors to levy 5 per cent. upon it, thereby diminishing its amount considerably, it is proposed to pay the money from the treasury to the school teachers upon the certificates of the Board of Commissioners as to the position that the teacher occupies. As the money is now given according to the class of the teacher, no difficulty will arise in apportioning the amount which each should receive. The county assessment will go into the county treasury, and the party receiving the provincial grant will also obtain an order on the county treasurer for a like sum, and the amount levied on the county will be distributed upon the same principles as are applicable to the provincial grant. In that way a fund will be created that will enable the people in every section to have a school. We also propose, having furnished a large quota from the provincial treasury, and drawn a comparatively small amount by direct taxation from the pockets of the people all over the Province, to supplement the fund thus raised by a still further sum as the people may themselves decide in every school section—either by subscription or assessment. The only thing the legislature will demand is, that the schools of the county in virtue of the grant from the Province, and the sum levied upon the property of the county, shall be free and open to all. Another difficulty has arisen in connection with the fact that the people in a section could exclude the section from a school, by refusing to organize under the law, and appoint trustees. That would not be likely to arise under a bill which levies county assessment, and compels the people irrespective of their own action to contribute to schools; but it is possible that such a contingency may arise, and in order therefore to meet the injustice that might be done to the parties in the section that might be deprived of a school, the bill will provide that where the people shall refuse to organize and elect trustees the difficulty may be supplied by the Board of Commissioners appointing such trustees on the application of any 7 ratepayers who shall be contributors to the school fund.

I do not intend going into the full details of this bill. I will, however, state that the govern-