

would be able to procure a better education for their children, and the State reap an advantage in having even a portion of the community more liberally educated; and at a smaller cost to the State than under existing circumstances. By the introduction of Voluntary Schools, and their affiliation with our present Public School system, parents could associate themselves together in order to secure for their children, by united effort, an education, not alone embracing the elementary secular instruction required by the State, but also other, and possibly better, secular work. Voluntary Schools would afford opportunities to religious bodies to secure for the children of their own communion the religious instruction they desire, dogmatic or undogmatic as they please. "Financially it seems to me to be the height of folly," writes the Duke of Argyle, "to discourage the greatest of all agencies—zeal for religious truth—" in persuading men to support efficient Voluntary Schools in which they "take an earnest interest. I should be prepared to deal equally with all voluntary societies, and all churches in paying them for their work as tested by such methods as may be deemed best." That Voluntary Schools would save our municipalities a large amount now expended on sites and buildings is shown by practical experience in other countries. They will certainly be found to be a means by which large sums may be saved in any city or town in Ontario where the population is dense enough to justify their introduction.

The taxation necessary for the maintenance of the present system of Public Schools is now recognized to be a heavy burden on the community. An item of considerable importance in the expense is the amount required for the purchase of school sites and the erection of school buildings. For example, in Toronto we find that the average

cost for each child for accommodation alone is about \$50. That is to say, in a school accommodating 500 children, the site and buildings have cost the municipality \$25,000. Now, assuming that we should have only ten Voluntary Schools in Toronto, each accommodating 100 children, in the aggregate this would represent 1,000 children, or what is equivalent to two ordinary schools. The city might be saved in this way the direct expenditure of \$50,000. At the same time the secular instruction would be at least as efficient in the Voluntary Schools as in the Public Schools, and the cost to the municipality of imparting the same secular instruction no greater than in the Public Schools. As a matter of fact, Voluntary Schools must be more economical to the municipality, because, while no public money will be expended on them unless the work they accomplish is up to the required standard, in Public Schools the money will be expended no matter how inefficient the work in any one of them may be. Further, Voluntary Schools will enable an association of parents to do more for their children than can be done in an ordinary Public School. In other words, they will enable parents to build upon the elementary work of the Public School, and to add to this, at their own cost, other instruction, and possibly more thorough secular instruction, without adding any additional burden to the taxpayer.

Another matter worthy of consideration is the fear of the spread of contagious diseases. This danger is five times greater in one school of 500 children than in five schools of 100 children each; in addition, the loss when the school has to be closed on this account would be proportionately less in the case of Voluntary Schools, where isolation would be more complete and more easily obtained.

One great objection brought against