

Province into the details of Christian doctrine, or to prepare them for communion. Its main, if not indeed its sole, aim is to make good citizens ; intelligent, capable, law-abiding citizens. But under our present system, schools exist and are maintained by the State which are church schools in everything but in name, which are in fact proselytising agencies. Their establishment in the early history of the Province is an inconsistency which it is not, perhaps, difficult to explain, but their perpetuation can scarcely fail to be felt by the majority of the inhabitants, as a misappropriation of public funds and an injustice to a large section of the community.

Second, the system of separate, or sectarian, schools operates injuriously on the well-being of the State. However useful it may be to the church or churches adopting it, enabling them to keep their youth well in hand and to preserve them from any danger to faith or morals which might result from daily contact with those of a different creed, it is in that measure hurtful to the unity and therefore to the strength of the State. It occasions a line of cleavage in society, the highest interests of which demand that it should, as far as possible, be one. It perpetuates distinctions and almost necessarily gives rise to sentiments which are at once a reproach and a peril. I do not think the religious differences between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches small or unimportant. As a Protestant, sincerely and firmly believing our faith to be more scriptural, I could not wish these differences to be thought of little account, but surely it is possible for the one party and the other to maintain steadfastly their respective beliefs without cherishing sentiments of distrust and hostility to the manifest injury of the public weal. And yet they are the almost necessary result of a sectarian system of educa-

tion. The youth of the country, its future citizens, are separated in the school and in the play-ground. Separation results in mutual ignorance, begets indifference, misconception, sometime even contempt. This is no fancy picture. One has only to listen to the language and mark the countenance of the children of Winnipeg to-day, when reference is made to those of the other faith, in order to see how much ignorant scorn exists, which could not exist did children of all faiths meet in the same school and associate in the same play-ground. Surely the State should not, unless compelled to do so, lend the authority of law, and the support of public moneys, to a system of education which so injuriously affects its unity and therefore its stability and well-being.

I do not know whether the Province has the power to change the existing system. That is a question of law with which I feel myself incompetent to deal, and which in any case could not be suitably discussed on an occasion like this. One may certainly wish that it may be found to possess the power, or if not, that it may receive it. The system, itself, of separate or sectarian schools appears to be incapable of justification on any ground of right principle or even of wise expediency. I do not expect to see any permanent contentment in relation to the question while the system is maintained. The conviction will continue to be deeply and generally cherished, that the equities of the situation have been disregarded and that the interests of the State have been sacrificed to meet the requirements of the Church of Rome.

But if a purely secular system of education is deemed in the highest degree objectionable, and a denominational, or sectarian system only less objectionable, what is it proposed to establish in their place? I answer, a