

# THE PRESBYTERIAN.

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RECENT change in the mode of collecting the revenue for school purposes in Montreal has drawn attention once more to the unsatisfactory state of the School Laws in Lower Canada. Under the law as it stood before the present alteration was made, the city of Montreal was taxed to only one-fourth the amount, according to the population, of the rest of Lower Canada, Quebec excepted, and only received from the School Fund in the same proportion. Now it is to be taxed at a rate three times in excess per head of the rest of Lower Canada, while the grant remains the same. In other words, Montreal is to raise a sum twelve times in excess of that which it is to be allowed to draw from the Educational Fund. Were this the whole grievance to be complained of, the matter might be left for discussion in the local papers, as it would possess but little general interest, and need not, therefore, occupy our columns. But the change has raised other points for consideration which must necessarily attract attention, and which would not, with a healthy state of public opinion, unfortunately wanting among the people of Montreal, be allowed to rest unsettled. Possibly, when the tax presses upon the pockets of the rate-payers they may awaken to the necessity of something being done. Nothing else would appear to be capable of rousing them to any sense of duty in this respect. What Shylock the Jew said in bitter irony, may be applied, with perfect truth, to the Protestant population here. They bear their ratings with a patient shrug, bend low, and in a bondsman's key, with bated breath and whispering humbleness, submit to all the ill treatment that the Minister of Public Instruction chooses to put upon them. The heavy tax may, perhaps, do something to create a feeling of interest in this most

important question; nothing else appears capable of doing so.

The proportion of Roman Catholics in Montreal as compared with Protestants is about two-thirds of the former to one-third of the latter. It was known that at the last meeting of the Local Legislature, Mr. Chauvean had determined to bring forward proposals for changes in the School Act. It was notorious that the Educational Endowment Fund had been wasted and frittered away—we will not say misapplied, as from the state of the accounts it is impossible to say how the Fund stands. This much is known, that the Jesuit Estates, which should have produced a large revenue, now yield nothing, or next to nothing, and no explanation has ever been given of the manner in which this has been brought about, no one in Parliament having apparently the courage to demand or the perseverance to insist on a close and searching investigation into the state of affairs. The Fund being bankrupt, some means, it was felt, must be resorted to in order to supply to some extent the deficiency, and certain members of a committee which was formed in Montreal to look after Protestant interests, proceeded to Quebec to exercise some sort of supervision over the doings of Mr. Chauvean. As might have been expected from the primary blunder committed in giving the name of a committee to promote *Protestant* education to a body which should have steered clear of everything bearing the appearance of sectarianism, and whose object *ought* to have been to insist on the establishment of *Common Schools*, pure and simple, the Committee which went down to Quebec to watch over the Bill were outwitted, and we have no doubt laughed at by the astute managers of the Education Office. A promise was made (they are easily made) that a clause should be inserted in the Bill that the proceeds of the tax should be appropriated to Roman Catholics and Protestants in exact propor-