

# The Presbyterian Record.

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## RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN CANADA.

**The School Question.** Persistently, the Roman Catholics claim that they want the same rights in Manitoba that they give to Protestants in Quebec; and, as persistently we must repeat that they have more rights now in Manitoba than they give to Protestants in Quebec. In the latter, Protestants have not equal rights. In Manitoba, Catholics have all the privileges that Presbyterians enjoy, — the right to a good education in schools supported and controlled by Government, where no one's religion is interfered with, and the right to teach their catechism as they please, outside the schools, to their own children. The fact is that the Roman Catholics have very special privileges in Quebec which they do not grant to Presbyterians, and not content with equal rights in Manitoba, they want special privileges there also.

**Unfairness in Quebec.** Protestants in Quebec are unfairly treated in the very foundation of the Educational System. In the exact words of the Code, the Council of Public Instruction is composed of three equal parts, as follows:—

1. The Bishops, ordinaries, and administrators of the Roman Catholic Dioceses and Apostolic Vicariates situate in whole or in part in the Province.
2. An equal number of Roman Catholic laymen appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.
3. A number of Protestant members equal to the number of Roman Catholic members appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

The hierarchy are members *ex officio*, independent even of the Government, while Protestant ministers, even bishops of the Episcopal Church, are ignored. These R. C. bishops, if unable from any cause to attend, can appoint a substitute with full power to act for them, which no other member can do, so that they control all matters of education. To this monstrous injustice the Protestants of Quebec have to submit.

**More Injustice in Quebec.** While in most cases, where there are enough Protestants to form a separate school, they can pay the taxes to their own schools, there is yet glaring in-

justice. In Montreal, for example, companies and corporations, even if wholly Protestant, have to pay their taxes into a fund, which is divided according to the population, *i.e.*, some four-fifths of it goes to Roman Catholic schools. It is estimated that some \$10,000 annually is thus paid by Protestants in Montreal for the support of schools whose chief object is to make good Catholics; where the chief text book is the Roman Catholic Catechism, which teaches that Protestantism is heretical, false, blasphemous, ruinous. Repeated efforts have been made to get this gross injustice set right, but in vain. The Bishops have control, and Protestants have to submit to this wrong.

**A Flagrant Case.** Protestants, where there are enough of them, can petition and have a separate school, otherwise they must pay to R. C. schools. But the Council, controlled by the Bishops, can form new parishes. And Protestants in these new parishes pay to the R. C. Schools.

At a place where Montreal and three other parishes meet, the Council, five years ago, formed a new parish, taking a part from each of the four. It was done quietly. The Protestants knew nothing of it, but went on paying their taxes to the Protestant schools in the parishes to which they formerly belonged. After a lapse of three years the R. C. Commissioners sent them accounts for three years of taxes to the Catholic schools of the new district. They appealed, but there was no help. They had to pay, and there the matter still stands. And it is a sample of the "liberty" and "tolerance" in other places in Quebec. To call it iniquity is to degrade the term.

**Schools in Manitoba.** It is well to note a few facts: 1. Before 1870 there were no Government schools in Manitoba, and hence, no Government supported Separate Schools. The few schools were private, supported by the different churches.

2. In the Original Bill of Rights there was no mention of Separate Schools for Manitoba, it was secretly inserted afterwards, and therefore