

“The first statement of fact is as follows :—

“In 1890 laws were passed changing the school system, and replacing it by other enactments, which are, for a portion of the community, a source of grief, regret and hardship. The result of the new system is purely and simply the legal suppression of all Catholic schools, and the maintenance of all Protestant schools, with the rights and privileges they enjoyed previous to the school laws of 1890. The Catholic ratepayers have now to help to support the Protestant schools, which are exactly what they were, and to which, naturally, Catholic parents cannot conscientiously send their children.

“The second statement of fact is as follows :

“That for the last four years, the Catholics of Manitoba have been subjected to the unfair and unjust treatment resulting from the change in the school laws in 1890 ; that they have asked in vain for relief, and that instead of a remedy, they have been made the victims of a fresh injustice in the new Manitoba law, 57 Vic., chap. 28, assented to on March 2nd, 1894, one of the provisions of which forbids aid to be given by any municipality to any school not conducted according to the school system adopted in 1890.

“The effect of this enactment is stated by the memorialists to be that no municipality, even one exclusively Catholic, without a single Protestant in its limits, has any power to levy a single dollar for Catholic schools, while a Catholic municipality, where there are ten Protestant children, is obliged by law to levy on all the Catholics, as well as on the parents of the ten Protestant children, the money required for the education of the ten Protestant children.

“It is also stated that the Act of 1894 decrees the confiscation of all school property in all the districts which do not submit their schools to the new law, even although the school property may have been acquired by Catholics with their own money.

“The true facts may be briefly stated as follows :

“Previously to the year 1890, there had been two sets of schools, Protestant and Catholic, and provision was made by law for their maintenance and government. The maintenance was effected by a special school rate, levied upon each district for its own purposes, a general municipal rate, levied by the municipality and divided among the school districts in the municipality, and a grant from the government, which came out of the provincial treasury. In 1890 the above system was entirely changed, and a single set of schools was established. These schools are maintained by rates and grants as above set forth. They are non-sectarian public schools. The laws make no distinction between Catholics and Protestants, or between denominations of any kind.

“It is true that Catholic people complain that they are not treated as they should be, but the ground of complaint has not been properly stated. It is said that an unfair distinction is made against Roman Catholics. As a matter of fact, no distinction has been made against any one. The Roman Catholics demand that they shall be singled out from the rest of the community, and that special class legislation shall be afforded to them, as against all others. Our law is attacked because the legislature has refused to thus favour and distinguish them, as against other citizens. The ground of complaint, therefore, is not that an unfair distinction is made against Roman Catholics, but that the legislature declines to make an unfair distinction against others in favour of Roman Catholics.

“No citizen of the province has any justification in fact for claiming that he has not the same rights and the same privileges respecting education that any other citizen possesses.

“In addition to establishing the above principle in the public school legislation, of and subsequent to the year 1890, it has been made the duty of every ratepayer to contribute to the support of the public schools.

“The statement that the Catholic people are compelled to pay for the education of Protestant children is not ingenuous. Such a statement creates a false impression. The law is not responsible for any such effect. The correct statement of the fact is that all taxpayers contribute to the education of all children whose parents send them to the public schools. All taxable property is assessed for public school purposes, and all citizens have the same right to make use of public schools. The Catholic people have