

In legislating to remove this cause of complaint, it would be in the interest of the establishment of Dissentient schools, both Catholic and Protestant, to impose such restrictions as would prevent the immunities granted from being taken advantage of for the purpose of evading all school taxes. We have no doubt that such an amendment would be approved of by Catholics—for the very good reason, among others, that they have the same interest as Protestants in the law affecting Dissentients—and we see no reason why it should not become law, unless indeed it be opposed by Protestants themselves, as in the case of Mr. Sicotte's bill which was opposed in the press and actually petitioned against.

These two changes, that in relation to the taxes of absentees and of incorporated companies and the one just now adverted to, are asked for on the ground that the same thing exists in Upper Canada. Such is not the case. In Upper Canada the property of absentees in any *school section or division* (which is more than in any parish or township) is liable to be rated to support the schools of the majority; and although a Roman Catholic who gives the legal notice that he is a Roman Catholic and a supporter of a separate school, is exempt from the payment of all public school taxes or school rates provided he resides within three miles in a direct line of the school of which he professes to be a supporter, whether he resides within the section or district, or not, he is *not exempt*, from taxes on property that he may own in other *school sections*, whether there are separate schools in such sections or districts or not. School districts are quite different from municipalities, and the restriction in some respects is much more stringent than it is even now in Lower Canada.

It is true that the dissentients of two municipalities are allowed to have a united school for both; but we have already seen that the same facility has been allowed in Lower Canada in certain cases.

The argument that the schools of the majority in Lower Canada are not *non sectarian*, is hardly fair when a comparison is established between the two sections. Separate schools are allowed on the ground of the conscientious views of those who do not find themselves at liberty to send their children to the schools of the majority; and, to make the two cases parallel, it is enough to say that Catholics are as much forbidden to send their children to what are called *non sectarian* schools as to Protestant schools.

It is also urged that the law ought to be so amended that the school moneys could be paid directly to Dissentients, and not through the hands of the School Commissioners. This is simply asking for that which already exists. Such are the provisions in the law (sub-sec. 3rd, sec. 57th chap. 15, Consolidated Statutes), and such is the uniform practice of the Department, with the following exception. Inasmuch as the share paid to Dissentients is to be divided in the same proportion to the whole sum granted to the municipality, as the entire number of children attending the Dissentients schools bears to the entire number of children attending school in the municipality, it is necessary, in order to make the division, that