

and the attempt be made to institute a system of public school instruction, in which religion shall be recognized only by its exclusion, I find it difficult to believe that the present House, numbering many thoughtful, Christian men, when it is fully seized of the question, will give to such a measure its sanction. In resisting the attempt, if it is made, members may count on the hearty approval and support of many whose voices are seldom heard, perhaps too seldom, on public questions. The hope may be entertained that a Bill seating secularism pure and naked in the public schools, will not be suffered to obtain a place on the statute book of this fair province. If the considerations adduced in this lecture have any force, it should encourage the opposition, not only of Christian men, but of thoughtful and patriotic citizens. In my humble opinion, and I trust it is the opinion also of many whom I address, a system of public school instruction, which makes no provision for the recognition of God, which does not even allow such recognition, in which the Bible shall be a sealed book, and the name of the Saviour of mankind may not be spoken, and in which the highest sanctions of morality and the most powerful persuasions to right conduct—those I mean which religion and religion alone supplies—are not allowed to be employed, such a system could scarcely fail to be prejudicial to the State, as it ought to be intolerable to the conscience of a Christian people.

At the opposite extreme there is the system of separate denominational schools, such as to some extent now obtains in this Province, a system under which is not only religious instruction given, but the distinctive doctrines and practices of individual churches are taught. Does the continuance and extension of this system promise a solution of the educational

difficulty? By no means; Less injurious probably in its operation, it is even more indefensible in principle than the one which has been so freely criticized.

First, it is in direct violation of the principle of the separation of Church and State. It is unnecessary—indeed it would be quite irrelevant—to argue this principle here. It is that on which, rightly or wrongly, the State with us is constituted. I do not understand it to mean that the State may not have regard to religious considerations, such as it shows, when it enforces the observance of the Sabbath rest, or that it may not employ religious sanctions, as it does when in its courts of law it administers an oath in the name of God; but I do understand it to mean that the State is neither to give material aid to the operations of the Church in any of its branches, nor to interfere with its liberties. Each, while necessarily influencing the other, has its own distinct sphere, and must bear all the responsibilities of action within that sphere. Now when the right of taxation, and in addition grants of money are given by the State to schools, in which the distinctive doctrines and rites of any church, whether Protestant or Catholic, are taught, schools which, while giving instruction in secular branches, are used at the same time to extend the influence, if not to increase the membership of that church, then the principle of the separation of church and State is violated almost as much as if the officiating minister or priest were taken into the pay of the State, and the violation (I say it with all frankness, but without any feeling of hostility to any class) is not more easily borne, that it is mainly in the interest of a single section of the Church. The public school is surely meant to be the school of the State by which it is supported. It does not exist to initiate the youth of the