

and plant them like Martello towers against intemperance and pauperism, and he would support them to the extent of two-thirds by a rate, and to the extent of one-third by a grant from the Privy Council-office, but this third should only be paid on condition that the schools came up to the standard of efficiency stipulated for by the Privy Council. He would also have school beaules appointed by the schoolmasters or by the Town Council, and they should have power to summon any child found in the streets between nine and twelve in the morning and two and five in the afternoon, and he would do nothing more.

He believed that by giving such powers to the municipalities of the great cities, and by compelling them to erect schools and rate the inhabitants for their support, they would sweep the streets of hundreds of thousands and accomplish the object he had in view. He admitted that we had a magnificent system of denominational schools, in which 1,500,000 of our population were instructed, but as regarded the poorest classes they were not affected by these schools; the children who were at present being educated in them were rather those of the poorer portion of the middle class and the artizan. It was a great mistake to suppose that the working class consisted of only one class. He believed that a system of free secular schools with compulsory attendance would give a great impetus to education, and parents would send their children in larger numbers than they did at present.

Mr. Dixon stated that in Birmingham there were 55,000 children of the working class of school age, that about 20,000 were in schools, and 35,000 attending no school whatever; that the parish authorities had failed to enforce the Denison Act; and that the Factory Act had emptied the factories without filling the schools. He argued that our school system must base itself on taxation, and that our schools must be unsectarian and free.

Mr. Fawcett agreed with the conclusion of the Duke of Newcastle's Committee that the Privy Council Grant could never be expended in a thoroughly National system of Education. What was wanted was a compulsory rate and a compulsory attendance, the latter because there was actually at present more school accommodation than there were children. This want of education resulted from a combination of motives, including the ignorance, poverty and selfishness of the parents. Some parents were too ignorant to appreciate the advantages of education for their children. Others were too poor, and a third class too selfish. Surely if they could compel working children to go to school, they had tenfold more right to coerce the idle. Enforce attendance, and there was an end of the principal argument against compulsory rating, for he could not for one moment accept the doctrine, that there was no connection between the spread of education and the diminution of crime. If, then, the taxpayer complained they would be enabled to reply, 'Bear this additional burden for a few years, and you will see a great reduction in the rates, which are now swelled by pauperism and crime.' He thought that education as well as pauperism and crime should be partly a local and partly an imperial charge, for in that way they would make a large portion of the wealth of the country which now escaped local taxation contribute its share.

As to the religious difficulty, he did not think that it was insurmountable. At all events the country was beginning to resolve that sectarian rivalry should no longer stand in the way of the education of the people. He did not wish to introduce irreligious education; but, as practical men, they must see that schools supported by rates must be made entirely un-denominational. If, however, any one liked to have denominational schools, they might escape the school rate, for it need not be levied in any district which the Government Inspector reported to be sufficiently provided; and so he saw no reason why the two systems should not work side by side. We should only require compulsory instruction for a single generation.

Mr. M. Pattison, one of the Commissioners of 1861, said, in his report on education in Germany, that the school was compulsory there only in name—it had become so deeply rooted in the social habits of the German people, that, if the law were repealed to-morrow, the schools would continue to be as full as they now were, yet the Home Secretary last year, after citing these words, went on to say that those who demanded compulsory education were striving for what was Quixotic and impracticable.

Mr. Alderley admitted that in the great towns which had been referred to there was no lack of school accommodation; so that what we really wanted seemed to be merely increased police powers. As to enquiry, there had certainly been enough of that. He believed, however, that the subject would best be dealt with by further minutes of the Privy Council, for he did not think the present system had been fairly tried, and he had a great objection to embark in new remedies till the old ones had been exhausted. He should be glad to see the denominational system carried out. He thought that even now a hybrid bill enabling large towns to rate themselves for educational purposes would confer a great benefit.

Mr. Buxton said that the real question was whether the machinery proposed could be carried out. The proposition that the police should catch all the idlers, and send them to school every day, seemed to him to be absurd, because it would occupy all

their time. He was opposed to the revolutionary measure of the hon. member for Brighton, and thought that there was great force in the objection that unless the parents consented to send their children to school the compulsory system would fail.

The next proposal was to get rid of the voluntary system, and make the schools public institutions, supported by the rates.—There might have been some jealousy of the Church obtaining the leading part in the management of the schools, but the clergy had shown so liberal and unsectarian a spirit in the education of the people that there was no ground for such jealousy, and in his opinion the nation owed a debt of gratitude to the clergy for their self-sacrifice and devotion to the cause of education. What really was the present state of this educational question? They already had a gigantic machinery at work with the full concurrence of the country, and which though not so fruitful as they had hoped, yet had wrought effects of infinite value. Already one in 7·7 of the whole population was on the school books, while in the best educated countries in the world the proportion did not exceed 6·25. Nor was it for want of the machinery that the proportion was not far larger. It was only in a limited degree that the still existing lack of education was owing to the want of school accommodation and appliances, but to the apathy of the parents of children. At Manchester, for instance, the Education Aid Society issued tickets to the children of the poor, which would have furnished them with schooling had the parents cared to use them. And yet in December, 1866, out of 21,000 children who had received such tickets less than 10,000 were found to be at school, and he saw no reason for believing that the proposed change from voluntary support to a general system of education rates would have any marked effect in curing this great evil.

It would be rash to sweep away a great system which had been long established, which had rather grown of itself as it were from natural roots, in the conscientious benevolence of the people, than been forced upon them from without, and which, though not perfect, had at any rate worked marvellously well, and was becoming every day more efficient. As Lord de Grey showed the other evening, in last year the number of schools inspected had increased by a thousand; the number of children present at inspection was more than a million and a half, being an increase of 136,000; the average nominal number attending was 1,241,000, being an increase of little less than an hundred thousand; while the numbers of certified teachers, of assistant-teachers, and of pupil-teachers were all largely increased.

The system was not a decaying one, but a stationary one, it was a growing, a vigorous, a flourishing system, it was one really adapted to the feelings and the wishes of the people. Another difficulty really must be taken into account. The pressure of rates was really a crushing burden on the people, and was producing very disastrous effects. It was causing great suffering; was sinking many into pauperism; and greatly discouraging the building of houses for the poor. It would be a serious thing to increase this distressing burden, and he could not but think it somewhat rash to throw the weight of supporting our schools upon this precarious and painful source of income, and thus to extinguish, as they certainly would, the voluntary contributions, amounting, at the present time, to half a million per annum.

He would not now touch upon the religious difficulty beyond observing that it did not arise, as many seemed to think, from a mere sectarian bigotry; the people in this country had a profound conviction, which ought not to be treated with contempt, that their children ought to be brought up in the fear of God, and with a knowledge of their Christian duty, and no system could flourish that did not fully recognise and respect that feeling.—Upon the whole, he thought that the country was not at all prepared for the radical change indicated in the amendment of his hon. friend.

Lord Sandon argued that the accounts with regard to destitute children were so diverse that before affecting any great change in the educational system it would be well to have more accurate returns. He did not believe the country was prepared for a great change, or that the artizan class would be content with an education that was not distinctively religious.

Mr. W. E. Forster thanked Mr. Melly for the great pains he had taken in the cause of education. He also agreed that the class of children of which he had spoken ought to be considered apart from other classes. These children escaped education because there was no co-operation by the parents. The consequence was that they were ready to become members of the dangerous classes.

The time for comprehensive measure was come. It would have been quite impossible, however, to introduce now a measure which would occupy almost the entire session. He believed it would be impossible to deal with the question by any mere alteration in the present minutes of the Revised Code, for the House would not, he thought, consent to make such changes as would be necessary to turn the present system into a national one. It was one of the hardest problems any Government could have to solve, how to change the present partial denominational system into a national system without injuring the present system.—They wanted to touch those who were not reached by voluntary efforts. He confesses he had lost hope that the present system could do much more than keep pace with the increase of popu-