

ought, particularly, to be animated with the sincere desire to give to this law, how soever defective it may be, the most extended operation possible. This appears so much the more necessary that the law confers upon these persons enormous powers and attributes which they exercise without apprehending the control or the surveillance of any authority whatsoever.

Can happy effects be expected from a law on public instruction, when the School Commissioners charged with its execution are nearly all entirely incompetent to discharge the numerous and important duties imposed upon them? What can be expected from a law whose ambiguous and obscure provisions, drawn up without order and without method, encumbered with difficulties which embarrass even juriconsults, what can be expected, I say, from such a law the execution of which is confided at random, subject to the caprices of the elective system? It would be just as proper to have the merits of a painting decided by a jury of blind men. But what are we to think, if to the prejudices of ignorance, are often added bad feelings towards the law of which they are the agents?

But, it will perhaps be said that it is impossible to find in each School Municipality a sufficient number of men qualified to perform the duties of School Commissioners. Granted; and this impossibility is the best reason that can be given in favor of the control and the surveillance of the Government over the operation of the School laws. If, in general, the Commissioners are not competent to perform their mission, if they are incapable of making this law work, it is an additional reason why its operation should not be left without the control, without the active and energetic surveillance of the Executive; this is an additional reason, also, for not confiding to incompetent persons the powers and enormous attributes which they exercise without discretion as well as without appeal.

Thus the Legislature has left the execution of this law to incapable men; it has placed the teacher at the mercy of the caprice and arbitrary will of ignorant and stubborn despots: it has made men the sole judges of the system of instruction, of the mode of teaching, of the courses of study, of the classical books, the majority of whom can hardly read and write. Is it then to be wondered at that the law on primary instruction *has not worked with success* during the past, that its works badly at present. It is evident that it will produce no better results in future, if the existing order of things be continued. I ought to observe that all the School Commissioners are not ignorant and incompetent; there are some perfectly qualified to discharge the duties imposed upon them; but, unfortunately, their number is very small.

7th CAUSE.—Is the consequence of the little confidence which the people, generally, have in the present system of education. It naturally results from those which I have above pointed out. In effect, what confidence can the parents have in the advantages which result from instruction under the present order of things? A child has attended the schools of his parish during several years;—his parents, believing him to be sufficiently educated, withdraw him from school. The father has a letter to write, an account to draw up, or has received a letter which he cannot read himself. He calls his child and directs him to write or to read that letter, or to draw up the account. What is his disappointment, his grief, at discovering that the child cannot read, or write a letter, or draw up an account. "For what purpose, the grieved father will say, have I sacrificed so much money, have I deprived myself during so many years of the services of my child, to send him to schools which he has left as ignorant as I am myself?" The good man, incapable of comprehending the vices and the omissions of the present law, which obliges him to pay, for the advantage of his children, for an education which they have not received, and which they could not obtain,—throws the whole