

mon School system of this country. The Secretary had stated that the Chief Superintendent of Education was a man of great experience, and that we ought to listen to his suggestions and adopt them. On a former occasion, when a measure was up for amending the Common, and another for amending the Grammar School Acts, he (Mr. Blake) had stated that it was not the mere right, but the bounden duty of the House to form its own judgment and decide upon questions of this description. He denied then, and he denied now, that the House was called on, at the dictum of any man, no matter how learned he might be, or how experienced, to bow down its judgment to him in matters of this kind. (Applause.) He (Mr. Blake) would be ashamed to go back to his constituents and say that in any one particular, in which his reason had convinced him he was right, he had failed to exercise his reason. He proposed to give this Bill due consideration, but would exercise his own judgment in spite of the suggestions of the Chief Superintendent. Let the Chief Superintendent prepare a measure for the Common and Grammar Schools of Ontario—embracing both—and the House might consider it. (Hear, hear.) Then we should have a relief from that painful process of incubation through which this Bill must pass before it should come out of Committee. (Laughter.) With reference to the question of free schools, he heartily and cordially agreed in the aspiration that the schools of this country should become free. But he was bound to point out that the arguments in the published remarks by the Chief Superintendent, in which it was proposed to take that step, showed a very great fallacy. He would assume the data given by the Chief Superintendent to be accurate, and not susceptible of objection. It was highly satisfactory that as the intelligence and the circumstances of the country advanced, we should see a healthy progress toward the goal we all desired to see soon attained. But he did not know that progress, however grand and rapid, was an argument for interfering with the wholesome process under which this improvement was going on. He did not know it were an argument to say that under the natural operations of laws which allowed its schools to become free, we should step in and make these schools free in spite of the wishes of the people. If the data were correct it would be said that the House was only legislating in advance. But it was not so in fact. If the House looked at the record of the amounts levied in aid of the common schools it would find that in 1859 that amount was by no means insignificant—in fact the sum amounted to \$45,000. The sum levied by the rate bill in cities, towns and villages in 1866, was \$19,500; in 1867, \$20,900; in 1868, \$22,360; in 1869, \$23,343. Did these figures indicate that the public sentiment in cities, towns and villages—notwithstanding the extensive burden of taxation they had to bear in comparison with counties—did these figures indicate such a decided progress towards the adoption of the principle of free schools, as to lead to the supposition that there was a universal concurrence on that point? In the counties, where the taxation, as compared with towns, was nominal, they were going on, he rejoiced to say, in the direction of free schools; but, in the cities, towns and villages they were not going on so fast. He dreaded, if the House should choose to sweep off by one blow the sum derived from the rate bill, nearly \$20,000 a year, by declaring that the schools should be free—he dreaded that, in doing so, the House would injure the cause of education. If the House called on the Municipalities to provide, by direct taxation, the sum of \$24,000 in addition to their present burdens, it would not help the cause of education. What was destructive to the argument for these free schools was the fact that out of 4,500 schools in Ontario, 4,000 were now free. In his humble opinion, it would be better to leave the adoption of the principle of free schools to the people themselves, rather than have a law on the subject. (Hear, hear.) With reference to compulsory education, his own opinion was that, except in cities, this clause would not be found a living letter of the law. Even in cities to a large extent, and in counties almost entirely, the law would be a dead letter. He agreed with the hon. member for Lincoln (Mr. Rykert) on the subject of perpetual imprisonment. This perpetual imprisonment clause must be an accidental error in the Bill, and he would, therefore, pass it. With reference to compulsory education, his opinion was, that we could get that degree of education we could procure under any compulsory system by a judicious management and liberal expenditure of money in connection with our Common School system. Our popu-

lation was not indifferent to school education, and the man who was neglectful of it, as far as his children were concerned, was just the man who could not be forced by any process to pay the five dollars or go to gaol. (Hear, hear.) At the present time it was safe to say that one out of every four—men, women and children—in the Province of Ontario were going to school. (Hear, hear.) He did not believe that the compulsory clause ought to be enforced, could be enforced, or, as a rule that it would do any good at all. With regard to the proposals made on the subject of education, he could not help expressing the repetition of the feelings of apprehension he ventured to state on that point in the debate on the address. The more he had reflected on the matter the more difficult he had felt as to the possibility of our dealing thoroughly, in the present state of our schools, with the subjects the Bill proposed to deal with. He looked first of all at the salaries of teachers of our Common Schools, and secondly at the number of children they were called on to educate. He was obliged to say that he did not believe that we could, in our present state, according to what he saw in the reports presented as to the proficiency of these schools in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and having regard to the salaries we paid the teachers—he did not believe we could attempt to introduce into our Common Schools instructions in new branches, without a diminution in the practical branches of reading, writing and arithmetic. He would rather, if it was proposed to add these subjects of instruction, proceed with great caution, and apply them to the Grammar Schools, in which children of greater age were instructed. He thought, if the experiment was tried at all, that it would be preferable that it should be tried first at the Grammar Schools before they attempted to engraft it on the Common School education. He had stated in his speech on the address that he would rejoice if this scheme were practical, as applied to the Common Schools; but he could not see its practicality—he could not see what knowledge they could give the teacher which would be of any consequence, or which he would be able physically to impart to the pupils, after teaching reading, writing and arithmetic to the number of pupils that usually were found in the Common Schools. He was afraid that while gasping at a shadow, they might to a large extent lose the substance; that attempting to go higher, they might lose their balance, and fall away from the state in which they were now. (Hear.) With reference to county inspectors, speaking theoretically, he thought their appointment was desirable, that is if good and suitable men could be secured. He was not influenced in the matter in the slightest degree by the question of money; but he wanted to see that the money was money was not spent for naught, and he did not believe that at the proposed price they would get men who would make that improvement in the inspectorship which was desirable. (Hear.) So far as he had been able to obtain information, he believed that township inspectors were obtained at a very moderate remuneration, because they were men of some degree of leisure, and their duties could be accomplished consistently with the discharge of other duties. But if they were going to have efficient inspection of a large number of schools by one man, he was afraid that the sum proposed to be given would not produce the article required. (Cheers.) With regard to the terms in which it was proposed that the inspector should be paid, he could not understand why the Government insisted on the clause giving them the power of dismissal. It would really appear as if the Government thought that the public money voted by the House to be expended among the people of the country was their own. He thought the people of the country had sufficient confidence in the county boards to leave it to them to decide whether the inspector was unqualified, or was deserving of dismissal. (Hear.) It was a miserable attempt on the part of the Government to take away their heritage by offering the country a mess of pottage—by offering to bribe them with their own money. (Hear.) The same argument might be applied to the case of municipalities, over the reeves and treasurers of which the Government might claim the power of dismissal on account of malfeasance in the distribution of public moneys paid to such municipalities. He could not see the reason why this clause, which was so distasteful to a large majority of the House last session, and was, he believed, distasteful to a majority now, should be again introduced. As to the question of certificates, it was clear by the answer extracted from the Hon. Secretary that it was not intended to depart from any of the powers taken by the

Bill. The practical result would be that the day the Bill was passed the Council of Public Instruction might meet and settle its terms, and by them supersede the qualification of every teacher in the country. (Hear.) It was all very well for the hon. gentleman to say that it was not intended to deal with the teachers unfairly, but the hon. gentleman was not the "Council of Public Instruction." They all knew who was the Council—that it was the Chief Superintendent (hear), and that for all practical purposes, where they found the words in the Bill, "according to law," or "Council of Public Instruction," they might insert the words "Chief Superintendent." The teachers' certificates were granted by County Boards and were revokable by them, but the hon. gentleman had not sufficient confidence in them, and insisted that another power should supersede the boards, thus placing in the hands of the Chief Superintendent every Common School teacher of the 4,000 odd who held their certificates from County Boards, to be dealt with at his pleasure. He quite demurred to such a proposition. (Hear.) If the hon. gentleman was prepared to say that the teachers throughout the country at the present time were not possessed of proper qualifications, let him say so, and if it was necessary in the public interest that they should better their attainments and pass another examination before they continued their duties, let it be done. Let the House be told by the hon. gentleman that the knowledge of this deficiency, having come to the head of the Educational Department, he had communicated it to the county boards, and that the county boards had refused to do their duty, so that the existing law under which the country enjoyed self-governing powers had been fairly tried, and had been found ineffective; for a resort to centralization such as proposed ought not to be resorted to unless some great public good should require it. (Hear.) He passed from the subject of common schools with this observation that there were several minor clauses to which his attention had been directed, but he would refer to them in detail when the House was in committee. He would now turn to the question of Grammar Schools. There was, to a certain extent, a feeling in the minds of the people of the country that they had not much to do with Grammar Schools; that they were not for the benefit of the whole country, but only for the learned professions. It was an entire mistake to treat what were called the learned professions as one class, and the country at large as another. (Hear, hear.) How long would our learned professions exist if they were not absolutely essential to the prosperity and well-being of the country at large? How long would the institutions upon which the learned professions exist continue if they were not really essential to our existence as a civilized people? We are obliged to look within our own borders for the men who are to take care of our souls, our bodies, and our estates. We cannot import the material; we have to raise it and to educate it; and if we are not prepared to regard our whole system of public instruction as one harmonious whole, designed to give to the great mass of the people as large an education as their time, means and opportunity will enable them to get; designed also to afford to those who, by talent or superior advantage on the part of their parents may hope to use the means of rising, not through one institution merely, but as far as may be through institutions scattered broadcast over the country, we are inflicting a fatal blow upon our hopes of future greatness. (Hear, hear.) We must, as far as possible provide throughout the country for those who have superior abilities or greater industry getting a superior education necessary to enable them to rise. Who amongst us, even the most industrious, did not regret that we had spent so many hours in idleness that might have been spent in perfecting his education? Who did not feel that he owed a large measure of his success to the education he had acquired? Who was there that did not feel that a serious blow was inflicted upon superior education by centralizing the means of obtaining it, and so preventing many an aspiring youth from taking the first steps in a superior education because the means were not within his reach. From all that he could ascertain of the financial effects of the Bill upon the Grammar Schools, he was convinced it would be perfectly ruinous to them. In the first place, he would call the attention of the House to the fact that in certain localities the grammar schools were placed to a certain extent in competition with common schools. Now, if the common schools were made free, and the grammar schools, in order to sustain themselves, were obliged to impose a rate; the latter will be placed at a