STATISTICS

OF THE

COMMON SCHOOLS:

BEING

A DIGEST AND COMPARISON

OF THE

EVIDENCE FURNISHED

BY

THE LOCAL SUPERINTENDENTS AND THE CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT, IN THEIR REPORTS FOR 1855,

WITH

SUGGESTIONS ON THE ORGANIZATION OF A SYSTEM OF COMMON SCHOOLS,

ADAPTED TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND STATE OF SOCIETY IN CANADA,

IN A SERIES OF TEN LETTERS,

ADDRESSED TO

THE HONORABLE JOHN A. MACDONALD,

ATTORNEY GENERAL, &c., &c.

BY

A PROTESTANT.

TORONTO:

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN, POST OFFICE LANE,

AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS. PRICE 7½d.

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SUGGESTIONS APPLICABLE TO THE APPROACHING CRISIS,

IN A SERIES OF SEVEN LETTERS,

TO

THE HONORABLE JOHN A. MACDONALD,

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PREFACE.

In presenting the following letters, in pamphlet form, for general circulation, the object is simply to elicit inquiry. Recent events indicate an early change of the School system in this section of the Province. During the last session of the Provincial Parliament, an additional approximation was made to the European system of Common Schools, so far as to establish, in Canada East, a Normal School for Catholics and one for Protestants. Our Legislature had wisely decided, in that case, not only that general elementary education is a state necessity, but also that no system can be general which is not generally acceptable. And hence the complete separation, in school matters, between the two main divisions of the Christian community in that section of the Province. Now, as the argument employed to justify separation, in Canada East, is equally applicable to Western Canada, it is reasonable to conclude that this is the ground on which the contest will be decided here. And the current of events plainly shows, that the prostitution of the Education Office, to foment violent political and religious prejudices, is accelerating the crisis, in Western Canada, of a similar separation on religious grounds. The question to be decided by the Legislature is not whether Protestants or Catholics shall be dominant, but what is required to allay the existing animosities, so as to make a school system acceptable and consequently practical and general.

Assuming that the Legislature will be consistent, and that the circumstances attending the school requirements of the Eastern and Western sections of the Province are identical, and moreover, that the same line of argument will be employed here that has been applied there, the following letters, preparatory to the approaching change, are designed to assist enquiry by setting forth and classifying the principal facts in a clear and comprehensive, but, at the same time, epitomized form. It will be observed that the information relative to the actual condition of the schools, is drawn from two sources. The facts of the Normal School from the Chief Superintendent; those of the Common Schools from the Local Superintendents. It is of importance also that the Chief Superintendent's reports, in whatever refers to the operation of the Common Schools, should be based on what is contained in the local reports; and therefore it follows that whatever contradictions and discrepancies exist between the two classes of reports, we are bound to place credence in the testimony of the Local Superintendents. Having, thus, decided on the legitimate sources from which the facts are to be ascertained, the next business is to arrange and compare the facts themselves, so as to be

able to determine their exact import. This has been done here, in so far as space would permit, by brief extracts; and then, only of portions of such evidence as bears on the quality of the teachers, the irregularity of attendance, and the call for compulsion. No notice has been taken of the many complaints against other effects of the system; nor of those made against the present mode of appointing the Local Superintendents; against the limitation of school districts; against the separation of religious from secular instruction; against the frequent changes in the forms of the school reports, &c., &c. Such complaints, against each and every part of the school machinery, are multiform and general, and can readily be appreciated by reference to the reports. They form no part, however, of the substance of the following letters, as their admission would have taken up too much space, and have interfered, in some measure, with the conciseness which was desirable, and which may be considered the best means to procure for any production of this kind a general and attentive perusal. They constitute, nevertheless, important testimony, as to the general unacceptableness of the system as a whole; and, on this account, are not to be neglected, in forming our estimate of the purport of the local reports.

On Protestant grounds, the argument of these letters assumes it to be the duty of every Protestant to assert the right of conscience against all usurpation, from whatever quarter it may come. And on the practice of both Protestant and Catholic countries—on the organization and management of all grades of schools, superior and inferior, in those countries, as well as on the authority of the Word of God, it is also assumed that education is a religious work; to be supervised, throughout all its stages, by the constituted guardians of religion and public morality. And, furthermore, that with the exception of the political party with which the Education Office is identified, this duty, this practice, this authority, and the necessity of this religious supervision is conscientiously acknowledged by the people of Upper and Lower Canada.

No. I.

TO THE HONORABLE JOHN A. MACDONALD.

SIR,—Your position in the Government, your practical acquaintance with the nature and requirements of Canadian society, and the eagerness with which all parties look to you for the settlement of those contentions, heartburnings, and jealousies, inseparably associated with the present system of Common Schools, are the reasons which I offer for addressing you on the subject, in this public form.

Whatever may have caused the existing difficulties, whether defects in the system, injudicious administration of the law, or both of these causes combined, of one thing at least there is a certainty, that the public mind is now so thoroughly convinced of the necessity of direct and immediate legislative action, that the Government can no longer escape the demand for a modification, in some shape, of the school system or school law, so as to reconcile and conciliate the various interests which are subject to its influence. In view of this emergency, and with the certain prospect of school legislation being forced on the Government at an early day, I may be excused for endeavouring to analyze and simplify the facts of the official returns, in such a way that the actual results, compared with the time, labor and money expended, may be more readily estimated.

A classification of the official data, indeed, becomes the more necessary when it is considered that the local reports are at variance with the inferences of the general report. It unfortunately happens, that too little importance has been ceded to the reports of the Local Superintendents. So much is this the case that it is scarcely possible to find an instance where their testimony is criticised or even cited. On the contrary, the custom has been, on the appearance annually of the reports, to take the abstract of accounts furnished by the Chief Superintendent with his general statements and remarks, as an epitome of the contents of the local reports. I refer to the editorial comments of the newspaper press, in general, for the truth of what I here assert. The consequence is that the mind of the reading public has not been

drawn to the perusal of the most valuable body of evidence which could possibly be supplied; and which has consequently been neglected, and, for any useful purpose, been completely lost. Yet they ought to be the basis of the general report, as they are the only legitimate means through which the condition of the schools can be ascertained. If it had been the case that the statements and remarks of the annual general report had been a faithful summary of the statements and remarks of the Local Superintendents, it would have signified little whether the local reports should have been noticed. But the vast discrepancy of the figures and statements of the one when contrasted with those of the other, makes it a subject of regret that the discrepancy should have been so completely overlooked; for, thereby, the usefulness of the Local Superintendents has not been properly appreciated and sustained, and the continuance of defects has been concealed when they might easily have been detected.

The time has arrived when the Government must consider the school question from a different point of view than hitherto has been customary. For the indiscretion of the friends and administrators of the school system has brought about a crisis, which will sensibly affect the composition and stability of any future Cabinet. It is no longer what supplement or amendment of the school law will stave off for another Session the final settlement of the educational contest; but how any Ministry can be formed and can carry on the business of the country, without conceding something to those now extensively organised agencies which demand that the school law shall be altered so as to do no violence to the conscientious scruples of those who put no faith in disputed theories of education. Moreover, the originators and advocates of the system having become identified with the party which has been carrying on a religious agitation for political purposes, the school authorities have thereby got into disrepute, and conseqently the chasm which hitherto separated the religious and the secular systems has now become too wide to admit of any further hopes of compromise. The secular school party has, thus, lost ground; while the very means, by which this loss has been sustained, has added considerably to the influence of those who regard a purely secular system of schools, as a nursery for infidelity.

These circumstances, it is evident, have produced a change in the relative strength of parties, that no doubt will be followed by an equal change in the mode of treating the subject when it again comes up for discussion. They are noticed here, because it is proper that they should be kept in sight, as bearing, though indirectly, on the manner in which the school law has been administered.

Another consideration, and a most important one, is the attitude which the Church of England will assume in the approaching contest. The proceedings, at the last Convocation, held in Toronto, showed that party tactics of a political nature, on the part of a certain lay influence,

had succeeded in stifling, for a time, the solemn protest of the Church, as a united body. Through the commendable forbearance of the Lord Bishop, who has proved himself a safe pilot in all such cases, the lay influence was allowed to prevail. That influence has since played its part unsuccessfully; and I believe, is now thoroughly convinced that the course it pursued was the one most likely to defeat the object which it sought to accomplish. The Church was not then permitted to do what it had previously arranged should be done, namely, record its protest against the school system. But circumstances have since changed. The politico-religious crusade has been defeated, and as a consequence the contemplated alliance which was to create a dominant Upper Canada party is now repudiated and formally abandoned. As, therefore, the former obstacle to the declaration of a protest no longer exists, it is presumable that the Church will carry out its purpose and take action on the school question in accordance with its previously enunciated intentions. Looking at the position of the Church of England, with reference to the prospect of a satisfactory Separate School Act for the Church of Rome, it is not possible that she would be satisfied to be classed under the head of the Protestant Common School division, while the other or separate division would be instituted for the Catholics exclusively. So that between a participation with the Catholics in the same Separate School privilege, and the obligation to support Common Schools, there appears to be no alternative than to embrace the former. It is no longer a question whether the Catholics shall or shall not have a satisfactory Separate School Act. A great change has been produced on public opinion; aud the necessity of the measure is forced on the Government by the influence which the Separate Schools are exercising on party organizations among the more prominent members of the Legislature. The course, then, of the Church of England, irrespective of any choice in the matter, is one imposed by recent developments, independent of any positive or negative action on her part.

Of the Church of Scotland it is scarcely necessary to make any remark, for notwithstanding her comparative state of quiescence on Common School affairs, still, her attachment to the unrivalled Parish Schools of fatherland, and appreciation of their sterling merits, are too vivid to permit even a suspicion that she would countenance a system that is their opposite in every particular; not only with regard to the religion of the school-room, but also the status of the teacher and the practical results observable in the regularity of attendance and proficiency of the pupils. On this head, a little enquiry will be sufficient to demonstrate that the adherents of the Church of Scotland, in Canada, entertain the well-known opinions of the former Chief Superintendent, the late Reverend Professor Murray, whose experience, and unostentatious but practical common sense, amply qualified him to form not only a correct judgment respecting the character of the present experiment,

but also to predict the conflict which has since taken place and is still going on, and also the final disintegration which, we are about at no distant day, to witness.

In this state of the public mind, with a large majority opposed to the School law, the Government will have to consider the law on its intrinsic bearings, with reference no less to the sectional claims of the various religious bodies, than to the general interests of the whole of Canada, as a united Province. It is not, therefore, to be expected that, as hitherto, the Chief Superintendent will be entrusted with the drafting of a Bill, or that any measure will be tolerated in which the preamble is a deceptive representation of the insidious contents of the accompanying clauses. This practice has been repeated so often, as to have, at last, produced its natural fruit, a determination on the part of those who have suffered by it that the same shall not be again attempted. And nothing now remains but for the Executive and Legislature to grapple with the question on its practical issues: on the one hand, with the state of public opinion regarding it; on the other, with the competency of the system, as a means of carrying out the intention originally conceived, of a general and efficient educational machinery, at a comparatively small cost. Of these two divisions of the general question, the facts of the first are to be sought in the different media through which the public mind expresses its convictions; whether they be the comments of the newspaper press, the proceedings of public meetings, the remonstrances of religious corporations, the discord of the local School sections, or the dignified contempt shown to the Schools by the clergy, magistracy and influential classes, in never entering themselves, nor suffering their children to cross their threshold. The facts of the second are the official reports of the Local and Chief Superintendents. With the first of these two classes of facts, the public mind is sufficiently conversant. With the second, it is not. For notwithstanding the general circulation of official documentary evidence, the abstract of the accounts to which reference is chiefly and almost exclusively made, for public purposes, is so prepared as to make prominent what is of secondary importance, while the material data which are indispensably necessary to be known before a correct estimate of the actual condition of the Schools can be formed, are in a manner concealed. My object in taking in hand, on the present occasion, to canvass the working of the School machinery, is not for the purpose of introducing opinionative suggestions, not sustained by the returns supplied through the legitimately appointed channels. I do not intend to travel out of the Government record. What I propose is, to deal with the official reports exclusively, and to show from their own internal evidence, from their own numeral and financial tables, what the public want to know, and what may tend to assist, in some measure, the prospective action of the Provincial Parliament, namely, the purport of the local reports, with respect to the character of the teachers, the irregu-

larity of attendance, and the defective amount and quality of instruction, compared with the enormous cost, to the public, of each child attending school. Notwithstanding the great expense of the apparatus, including that of the Education Office with its publishing machinery, also of the Normal School, the annual legislative grant and municipal assessments, still this itself would be a point of little importance, if the machine could be made to work profitably, or even if its performance, however defective, could be supposed to supply grounds of hope for future improvement. But when we come to examine the tenor of the local reports, and find the universal complaint of bad teachers and irregular attendance; and, on looking to the table of expenses, ascertain that in some localities, the cost to the public for each child on the Average Roll is over £4 10s.—or $18; and moreover, find that the Average Roll of the Local Superintendents, the only criterion by which to measure the work done with the cost incurred, has been discontinued in the last annual report for 1855; and that this discontinuance has been occasioned in consequence of the discouraging statements exhibited by the Average Roll; it must be admitted that the duty of setting on foot a rigid investigation to discover the causes and determine the extent of the existing irregularities, is one that cannot be longer delayed.

In taking on myself the business of classifying the evidence of the official returns, I consider it proper to state at the outset the course which I intend to pursue.

First, I shall show, from the local reports, the extent to which bad teachers, irregular attendance on the part of the pupils, and the consequent unsatisfactory state of the schools are sources of complaint.

Second, that, in 1855, similarly as in previous years, the Local Superintendents, despairing of all chance of improvement by the ordinary means provided in the Common School Act, have recommended free schools, based on a compulsory assessment for the whole Province, as the only remedy.

Third, and with reference to this recommendation of the Local Superintendents, I shall show that where free schools based on compulsory assessments are established, the schools are in a worse condition and the returns are more unsatisfactory than in those places where the schools are supported by other means.

Fourth, the gross expense of the common schools, including interest on building fund, loss on the sale of debentures and other items. The yearly cost of maintaining the Normal School, the number of students trained, the number of certificates granted, with the number of teachers, which so trained at the public cost, have abandoned the profession.

Fifth, concluding remarks and suggestions on the general question.

I have the honor to be, sir, &c., &c.,

A PROTESTANT.

Toronto, 30th December, 1856.

No. II.

SIR,—The object of this letter is to show the extent to which bad teachers and irregularity of attendance, and the consequent bad state of the schools are sources of complaint. As this cannot, however, be done without reference to the local reports, I am necessarily obliged to occupy a large space with the evidence of these local witnesses. I find the Chief Superintendent's annual general report contains 140 extracts from the 269 local reports for Canada West; being little more than one half. Assuming that these extracts are selected impartially, it appears that the Local Superintendents are persons friendly to the present school system. For wherever their comments are made, in a general way, and with reference to their individual aspirations, they are eulogistic, it will be observed, of its main idea. It is not then to be supposed that they would say aught to its disparagement unless necessitated to do so by what had come under their immediate personal observation. It is when they condescend on the special facts that the truth becomes manifest. And, in this, theory and practice are, at once, seen to be at variance. With their aspirations, however, we have nothing to do. We look for the fruits of the school system in its practical results; and consequently those portions of the reports are really valuable which relate to the immediate facts, and which state in figures what has been definitely ascertained, irrespective of individual opinions.

The same remark is applicable to the annual general report, the legitimate purpose of which is to exhibit, on the one hand, a clearly defined summary of the work accomplished, during the year; and, on the other, the exact amount of expenses incurred. Notwithstanding that this summary should be exclusively of a practical nature, what should constitute its special merit is, in a measure, neglected or imperfectly performed, through a propensity to indulge opinionative laudations on the capabilities of the school system. A ten years experiment, however, should supply, at least, some data by which to compare its achievements with its professions. And so, equally in the case of the general as of the local reports, in order to get at the facts, it is necessary to discriminate between what is purely theoretical and what has a practical basis. Bearing this distinction in mind, it will be seen that I

have selected, in the following extracts, such portions as relate to matters of fact, and which are sustained by the tabular returns. Here is the evidence of the Local Superintendents:—

"I regret that the operations of our schools, in the township of Charlottenburgh, during the past year, have not been characterised by that efficiency which the friends of education and general improvement would have desired. One very great drawback to a progressive movement is the want of efficient teachers. * * * * * * Another cause of inefficiency is to be found in the system of granting certificates to those whose qualifications do not warrant it: this will especially apply to third class certificates; a class that should be entirely abolished."—*Wm. L. Fraser, Esq., Charlottenburgh.*

"The trustees and people in general are beginning to see the necessity of augmenting the salaries, in order to obtain properly qualified teachers, in place of those offering their services for half the ordinary wages, whose low attainments and inefficiency compel a change almost every six months, and are the causes of popular discontent."—*Wm. McEdwards, Esq., Lancaster, Glengarry County.*

"Although it is mortifying to reflect that of all the children of school age in this old settled township, *one third of them* are returned as not having been at school at all during the past year; yet it is believed that the attendance of children at school in the more rural sections of the township has been altogether unprecedented. The reason why so many of the schools having been vacant during the past year, is, I am happy to say, the reverse of negligence, namely, endeavouring to procure superior teachers. Some of them are still vacant, having ineffectually advertised for teachers."—*Nadab Eastman, Esq., Cornwall, Stormont County.*

"I regret to say that the standard of education in South Plantagenet is decidedly low, although I think I may with confidence affirm that some of our schools made some progress during last year. In reference to the schools under my superintendence, I must say that there are many drawbacks to its efficiency. First, the frequency with which teachers are changed in almost every school section. Secondly, the irregularity of attendance which can be seen when the disproportion between the average attendance, and the number of names on the school register is taken into consideration; and this disproportion is much greater in reference to the number of children in the school section between the ages of five and sixteen years, and the number of names of men in actual attendance."—*Peter McLauren, Esq., Plantagenet South, Prescott County.*

"I hope there is progress amongst us, but those most interested in the matter do not seem to exert themselves sufficiently to educate the children. A great deal might be effected by energetic teachers. We have none here from your institution, and I think such a preference should be given to teachers from the Normal School as would make it an object of importance to hold a certificate from it."—*The Reverend Peter Lindsay, A. B., Cumberland, Russell County.*

"With regard to the state of education in these townships during the past year, I think the progress in some sections has not been of the most promising kind. Some schools have not been kept open more than one half or two-thirds of the year. The irregular attendance of many of the pupils, and the frequent changes of teachers are also hindrances, all of which I hope will be obviated the present year."—*Lewis Chapman, Esq., Bastard and Burgeos South, Leeds County.*

"I am sorry that I cannot send you a very flattering account of the progress and state of education in this township; it is far behind what it ought to be. However, I can safely predict that in a short time the township of Elizabethtown will be second to none in the Province for good and commodious school houses. I am strongly of opinion that if it was not for the great difficulty in procuring competent teachers last year, it would be now in my power to furnish you with a satisfactory account of the position and standing of the youth of this township in the various branches of common school education.—*Jacob A. Brown, Elizabethtown, Leeds County.*

"The people are beginning to see the advantage of having a good substantial building in every school section. We meet, however, with considerable difficulty in finding teachers, adequate to the office, and are in expectation of the Normal School doing something for us under this head; but that aid is, I am afraid, at too great a distance. The young men who have attended from this part of the country, after having received the benefits of the school, have left for the United States, or engaged in some business. I am of opinion they should procure bail to teach a certain number of years, for a reasonable compensation."—*Henry P. Washburn, Esq., Leeds and Lansdown Rear, Leeds County.*

"The average time during which the schools in this township were kept open during the last year was about nine months and a half. The deficiency in this respect was caused by the difficulty of procuring teachers to supply vacancies.—*The Reverend Alexander Mann, A. M., Packenham, Lanark County.*

"I cannot boast of any improvements in our schools this year. There is an unwillingness on the part of parents to keep pace with the advancing salaries of teachers in other quarters; and a disposition rather to fall back on female teachers, of whom three are employed this year in this township. It may be noticed also, that different boards of examiners do not keep up to the same standard in giving certificates to teachers. Where there is a great scarcity of teachers of any kind there is a temptation to be more lax in granting certificates. Teachers often come to our board having second class certificates in their hand from other boards, to whom we would scarcely give a third one. This departure from the programme is perplexing and injurious.—*The Reverend John McMorine, Ramsay, Lanark County.*

In again referring to the progress of education in this old and long settled township, I can only say, that although perhaps in a few sections, improvement may be seen, in others much apathy still prevails. I have on former occasions referred to some of the many and various causes which I find still continue to exist, to retard this great work of popular education; and it is scarcely necessary here, to again enter into a lengthened detail. I may, however, remark that the want of competent teachers is severely felt; many of those employed are lamentably deficient in those attainments so essential to success."—*John Watson, Esq., Adolphustown, Lennox County.*

"Some of our sections are beginning to pay a reasonable salary; still the principal qualification with others is the amount of remuneration required,—persons teaching for the smallest amount of wages being preferred, and if the Government grant and the County assessment meet the charge, all is well, a good bargain is secured."—*Ephraim A. Dunham, Esq., Richmond, Lennox County.*

"We are getting a few excellent teachers in some of our best paying schools; but generally speaking the harvest is large and well qualified teachers scarce. My reports will afford you the best commentary upon the dearth of profound attainments in our common schools; the great majority of these are taught at least six months in the year by females, some of whom unfortunately are incompetent pioneers in the desert of youthful ignorance and imperfections."—*John B. Denton, Esq., Prince Edward County.*

"But while we rejoice at the prosperity of some, we are grieved that many others are in a lingering state; teachers are very inefficient; children attend irregularly, and parents manifest little care about the result."—*John Johnston, Esq., Hungerford, Hastings County.*

"In my visits to schools in this township, I find some sections characterized by an apathy and want of interest on the part of parents in not sending their children to school. There are many that have not seen the inside of a school for two or three years."—*D. G. Bowen, Esq., Marmora, Hastings County.*

"There are too many school sections in this township in proportion to the population, hence the progress of education is very much retarded. Another evil is employing teachers at low salaries."—*Edward Scarlett, Esq., Brighton, Northumberland County.*

"The advancement of common school education is also greatly hindered in this township by the too frequent change of teachers."—*By the same, Marmora.*

"The progress of education is also much impeded by changing teachers too often."—*By the same, Haldimand.*

"The people of this township are emphatically a willing people in the great cause of education; they err, however, in one important point, *i. e.*, changing the teacher too often."—*By the same, Murray.*

"Among the many hindrances which obstruct the working of our excellent school system we will mention a few. There is a class of teachers, (if it is right to apply this sacred appellation to those who have been teaching for some years without any motive but the £ *s. d.* and almost without education) who cannot be improved themselves, and are a stumbling block in the way of those who would improve. * * * * Closely connected with these gentry is another class of cheap teachers who never remonstrate for a moment against the evil of boarding from house to house, and who instead of studying their profession, spend precious time, joke-telling, or probably corrupting the manners of the children around by smoking tobacco, or imbibing snuff; by which means they often ingratiate themselves into the families with whom they board."—*By the same, Percy.*

"I am sorry to remark that in this township education does not advance, in consequence of employing incompetent teachers. A good teacher is generally inclined to look for high wages and a comfortable school house. He who works the cheapest is the man for this locality; the result is that we have only three or four schools. Any loggerhead who takes a notion to teach, marches into Peterborough to be examined, and as a matter of course obtains a third class certificate; on condition that there will be an improvement at the expiration of six months. The six months pass without making the slightest difference in his attainments."—*Daniel Sullivan, Esq., Douro, Peterborough County.*

"The greatest evil felt in regard to the improvement of our schools is the low standard of qualification allowed by the Council of Public Instruction. At every meeting of the County Board there are a great number of third class teachers enabled to occupy school rooms, if they can find trustees who are more anxious to get a cheap teacher than a good one; and that in the present case is not very difficult to do. The consequence is there are a great number of these teachers employed in the townships; and almost without an exception, in every section there are a number of pupils who are able to teach those whom the law and trustees authorized as their instructors. Such pupils, not being able to derive any benefit from the school, must stop at home. In this there is very great injustice, the children not only suffer considerable loss in the neglect of their education, but parents and guardians are obliged to support a school of no benefit to them."—*P. H. Clarke, M. D., Mariposa, Victoria County.*

"I have during the past year paid eighty five official visits to the schools, and delivered twenty-three lectures on education. With regard to progress in this township, I have found two great obstacles. The first arising from the very irregular attendance of children, and the next from the continual changing of teachers every year; this last practice is the more injurious, in consequence of the want of uniformity observed by the present race of teachers in their method of instruction; thus at each annual change pupils have to unlearn the method of their late, and acquire that of their new preceptor; this difficulty

can be obviated only by a supply of teachers all trained under one uniform system."—*The Reverend George S. Hill, Markham, York County.*

"Time, I conceive, will remedy the evils arising from inefficient teachers, but they might to some extent be bettered by abolishing the third class of instructors; not immediately, perhaps, but by announcing that after the year 1858, no third class teacher will be entitled to receive any government allowance. * * * * I also conceive that the most successful remedy for the irregular and non-attendance of so many children throughout the Province, is the employment of an improved class of instructors. Let the quality of the teaching be changed, and the school will not only become more attractive, but the amount and nature of the instruction communicated to those who attend irregularly will prove more solid and valuable."—*The Reverend John Gray, Orillia and Oro, Simcoe County.*

"There is a liberal disposition among the people to raise the salary of the teacher, if they could find one who could earn it."—*The Reverend Thomas Williams, Glassford, Wentworth County.*

"In these townships there is a lack of well qualified teachers. Higher salaries would have been given in many sections, could well-trained Normal School teachers have been obtained. Without such it is impossible that our valuable school system can be carried into successful operation. * * * Wherever there is an able and faithful teacher employed, I have observed that parents and others take a lively interest in the school."—*The Reverend Wm. Hay, Burford, &c., Wentworth County.*

"The average salaries of teachers are considerably higher this year than formerly. You will see that we have no Normal School teachers in this township. We have been obliged by higher wages to press persons into the service from other pursuits, who although well enough qualified for teaching, still want experience, and consequently cannot be as useful as though they were trained in the Normal School."—*Philip Gregory, Esq., Louth, Lincoln County.*

"The almost absolute necessity which exists in poor sections for continually changing the teacher is the greatest possible hindrance to the progress of the children. A teacher is engaged for three or six months, and by the time that he and his scholars have become mutually acquainted and interested in each other, they are obliged to separate; a few months afterwards perhaps, the trustees are prepared to re-open the school."—*George M. Evans, Esq., M. A., Woodhouse, Norfolk County.*

"Small school sections and a scarcity of well-qualified teachers, mentioned in my last annual report, as hindrances to the progress of education, are still ground of complaint."—*Robert Brydon, Esq., Dumfries North, &c., Waterloo County.*

"It is a great drawback to the hindrances of education, that the Schools are generally kept open during a part of the year, instead of being in operation during the entire twelve months: the reason of this state of matters is, in many cases, owing to the scarcity of teachers, but in others, particularly weak school sections, want of means is the great hindrance."—*Archibald Currie, Esq., Aldborough, Elgin County.*

"The scarcity of qualified teachers, in this vicinity, is, I believe, the main cause why the schools have been kept open so short a time during the past year."—*The Reverend Edward Sheppard, Dorchester South, Elgin County.*

"In the course of my visits to the several schools of this township, I have observed that some of the teachers therein, though probably possessing a sufficient amount of learning, so far as letters and figures are concerned, for the particular section in which they are teaching, and holding a certificate from the County Board, to that effect, are yet far from being qualified to teach the young idea how to shoot, to train children in the way they should go, or even to set a proper example before those whom they are trying to instruct."—*Thomas McColl, Esq., Dunwich, Elgin County.*

"The want of good teachers is very severely felt in this township, and the greater part of the trustees manifest indifference to the necessity of employing the same teachers for any length of time, in the same school."—*Chas. Fraser, Esq., Malahide, Elgin County.*

"Hitherto there has been a great want of appreciation of the value of instruction, and a dislike to pay for it, consequently many of our best teachers have been driven to seek other employments. But I find that there is at present an advance in teachers' salaries of from 20 to 25 per cent., yet the numbers applying for examination before the County Board, are not sufficient to supply the schools, and they are in too many particulars lamentably deficient in those attainments and qualities of character which are essential to success and usefulness."—*The Rev. A. Campbell, Chatham, Harwich, &c., Kent County.*

"Half of the schools in this township have been vacant for nearly half the year. We have some good teachers, but these breaks interrupt steady progression."—*Thos. Sutherland, Esq., Moore, Lambton County.*

As the principal cause of complaint, in these extracts, is the scarcity of competent teachers and the profusion of bad ones, we naturally turn to the Normal School, as the institution responsible for this state of things. The more so because the other defects and irregularities are

altogether imputed to this as their original cause. To the Normal School is assigned the duty of providing the 3,225 Common Schools in this section of the Province with teachers. To what extent and in what way it has performed the work are seen in the tabular returns. Of the 1,318 students, admitted in the nine years from 1847 to 1855 inclusive, and who received Normal School training, certificates of competency to teach were awarded to 855.* It is expected that the whole number of students so trained should have become teachers; but more particularly the 855 who received certificates. They are, in a manner, Provincial property, being trained at an expense to the Provincial revenue and especially for a Provincial purpose. In Europe where the efficiency of the Common Schools is made to depend on the efficiency of the Normal Schools, guarantees are provided for the continuance of the teachers in the profession. Indeed the least reflection is sufficient to convince any one who may not even previously have given the subject much consideration, that without such guarantee, the Normal School, in place of being a feeder to the Common Schools, in supplying them with teachers, a most necessary and indispensable part of a Government School system, must itself become a sort of select school for the gratuitous education of young men and women who are destined to follow afterwards the general avocations of commercial and domestic life. That this is precisely the character of our Provincial institution of that name will appear by a perusal of the following statistics, which show the number of teachers employed in each year between 1850 and 1855, with the number so employed who had been trained in the Normal School:—

	Number of Teachers employed.	Number employed who were trained in Normal School.
1850	3476	291
1851	3277	233
1852	3388	267
1853	3539	355
1854	3539	375
1855	3565	374

The returns do not state what portion of the 374 teachers employed in 1855 had received certificates or had only been trained; so that we are at a loss for means to ascertain precisely a very important, indeed the most important item in the annual statistics of the Normal School.

* This number 855 is reported in table L as having received certificates, of which 430 were awarded by the Masters in the Normal School prior to 1853, and 425 since that date by the Chief Superintendent. It will be seen, however, by reference to page 299 of the report for 1855, that the last number 425 in table L, is not correct; as, of this number, 44 certificates had expired and 25 were repetitions. The statement at page 299 referred to, appears to be given for the first time; so that table L, in the reports of previous years, must have conveyed an erroneous impression; and if, in the report for 1855, the reader should not happen to stumble accidentally on the statement at page 299, he would still be led to suppose by table L that 425 is the number of certificates which had been granted by the Chief Superintendent. How far the 430 certificates awarded previously by the Masters, may be equally incorrect does not appear. They may have all expired, which is very probable; but as there is nothing to indicate that this is the case, I have taken the numbers as they are set down in the table. The safest course, however, under the circumstances is to consider the Normal School responsible for the 1318 who are reported to have been examined, admitted and trained.

If we assume the 374 to include those who were simply trained as students, as well as those who held certificates, and compare this number with the whole number trained since the commencement of the institution, the difference will show the number of desertions as follows :—

Whole number trained in Normal School since its commencement	1318
The number so trained, employed as Teachers in 1855	374
The number of desertions	944

Or, assuming that the 374 held Normal School certificates, the desertions would stand thus :—

Whole number who received Normal School certificates since its commencement	855
The number holding certificates employed as Teachers in 1855	374
The number of desertions	481

Thus we see that of 1,318 Normal School students, 855 of whom had received certificates of competency to teach, and who, of course, went from that institution with the object ostensibly of becoming teachers, only 374 are reported as following the profession in 1855, the last year for which official returns have been made. So that the balance, 944 trained, or 481 holding certificates, had betaken themselves to other callings and other means of obtaining a livelihood. Yet the Chief Superintendent says, in his last annual report:—" The efficiency of the Normal School has, in every respect, been maintained, and in some respects, I think improved." And again, " The table shows attendance at the Normal School during the last year to be in advance of that of the preceding year." Are not these general remarks deceptive? That the school register should present an attendance of 137 students in 1855 against 86 in the year previous, could be no cause of gratulation, since even 137 is a falling off from the attendance of former years. For the register shows that 144 attended in 1852, and 161 in 1853. And, moreover, the attendance in 1854 was the smallest of any during the four years from 1852 to 1855. These general remarks of the last annual report, therefore, do not present a faithful statement of what is exhibited by a careful examination of the tables. In place of assuming satisfaction with the tabular returns, the truth should have been told, that the attendance had decreased since 1853, and was at a lower figure in 1855 than it had been even in 1852; and that of 1318 students trained, or 855 qualified teachers, produced at the Normal School, only 374 were engaged in the profession of teaching in 1855; being also one less than the number employed in 1854, notwithstanding that 45 additional teachers had been produced during that year.

This feature of the inefficiency of the Normal School to supply teachers for the Common Schools, is vouched for in the report of the Local Superintendent for the County of Leeds, cited above. Mr. Washburn says:—" The young men who have attended from this part of the country, after having received the benefits of the school, have

left for the United States, or engaged in some business." How much evidence of a similar kind could not the other 268 Local Superintendents have produced?

Now as Normal Schools are the mainspring or chief controlling power for the efficiency of government Schools, wherever such have been established, it necessarily follows that where the former are defective the latter must be so likewise. It is unreasonable therefore to think of bettering the condition of the Common Schools while the Normal School remains in its present state. The complaints made in 1855 are similar to those made in every year since the government school system was first introduced to Canada. Similar complaints in like manner constitute the burden of the reports of the Local Superintendents in the United States. And they will continue yearly to be made, in this Province, despite the changes or modifications which may in future be adopted in the machinery of the Normal School under the present system. On this head, I will express myself more fully, in the sequel. In the meantime I have partly shown, and will afterwards prove, that whatever excellencies the Normal School may possess under a properly organized school system, the present one is now, what it hitherto has been, and will continue to be, a gigantic imposture, profitable only to those immediately engaged in its management, but ruinous to our educational prospects and detrimental to the interests of the rising generation.

I have the honor to be, Sir, &c.,

A PROTESTANT.

Toronto, 5th January, 1857.

No. III.

SIR,—My last letter contained the evidence of the Local Superintendents on the general character of the teachers employed in the Common Schools, the consequent irregularity of attendance on the part of the pupils, and the actual bad condition and unsatisfactory prospects of the schools generally. I also showed, from the statistics of the Normal School, that, with the inefficient and abnormal state of that institution, no other results could have been expected. The Local Superintendents do not seem, however, to have apprehended the extent to which the desertions from the profession of teaching is carried by the teachers trained at the Normal School. They do not appear to have been cognizant of the fact, that of 1,318 students trained expressly to supply the Common Schools with teachers, of which number 855 are reported to have received certificates of competency to teach, only 374 were employed in 1855. Mr. Washburn is the only one who proposes that some corrective should be applied. He says, "I am of opinion they should procure bail to teach a certain number of years for a reasonable compensation." That the main cause of the inefficiency and irregularities complained of should be so completely overlooked, may, in a great measure, be imputed to the arrangement adopted in the preparation of the general tabular returns for the year. A general abstract of the number who received certificates, and the number actually employed, would have exhibited, at one glance, the amount of the work accomplished and its existing fruits. As before remarked, the expense would be a point of secondary importance if the work could be efficiently performed. But, with the ascertained facts so very disparaging, it becomes necessary that, in a general abstract, such as that suggested, the outlay should also form a distinct item. Table L should have contained, at least, two additional columns; one for the number of teachers employed, and another for the number deserted, in each year; a kind of information more necessary, in connection with the working of the Normal School, than the enumeration of the counties from which the students had come, which latter seems a comparatively useless species of intelligence. True, the number of trained teachers employed, in each municipality, is given in Table E. But that is not sufficient.

Its importance required that it should appear prominently in the general abstract. For what is the use of the Normal School if it is to train yearly a certain number of students, who, in place of becoming teachers, betake themselves to other employments after being so trained. The only criterion of its efficiency or usefulness, therefore, is the number of trained teachers officiating in the Common Schools. Compared with this, no specific fact is more necessary to be stated. Only by such statement can be seen the fruits which the system has borne, as well as what it is capable of producing. It ought consequently, as I have said, to have formed a separate head in the general abstract, in place of being consigned exclusively to an obscure column in a table of details. That the extent of the desertions has not been perceived may, thus, be accounted for; and the Local Superintendents may be exonerated from a charge of having overlooked the principal fact, indeed the fact by which the Normal School and the school system are to be judged. This oversight has led them, however, in many instances, to recommend a measure which present experience, sustained by official data, proves would be attended with positive and certain failure. The recommendation is a compulsory assessment for the whole Province. In view of the existing defective condition of the schools, the machinery is seen to be at fault somewhere, and, in order to supply the deficiencies, in short, to make the system complete, it is assumed that this compulsory assessment would accomplish the object. That there may be no mistake about the spirit in which this recommendation is made, and the extent to which it is ascertained, I think it necessary to adduce the following quotations, as testimony, from the Local Superintendents:

"Our common school system will not have attained perfection, until the property tax be the only mode of sustaining its operations, and coercive measures be added to secure universal attendance. These provisions, with competent teachers, cannot fail in giving character to our educational efforts; which otherwise can scarcely be attained.—*Wm. L. Fraser, Esq., Charlottenburgh, Glengarry County.*

"But much yet remains to be done, and until such time as our legislators will devise ways and means to put an end to the excitement and disquietude occasioned by diversity of opinion, respecting the mode of supporting the schools, and establish a universal system of taxation for all school purposes, no regular progress can be expected."—*Wm. McEdwards, Esq., Lancester, Glengarry County.*

"It is necessary for the government, in my opinion, to add another link to the chain of education, and in their legislative wisdom to call upon all to uphold a universal system of education. * * * Therefore, I earnestly trust that, during the present session of the legislature, an act will be passed levying an assessment on all rateable property in Canada, for the support of common schools, which will do away with everything that is disagreeable in carrying out the intentions of the present School Act."—*Peter McLaren, Esq., Plantagenet South, Prescott County.*

"I am fully convinced that the only way of making our schools prosperous is to make them all free, by legislative enactment. If they were made so it would prevent a great deal of ill feeling at the annual and special meeting. In time, the people would get used to paying for their schools, as they do to other taxes."—*James Clapperton, Esq., Augusta, Grenville County.*

"I beg leave again to state strongly to you the necessity of adopting some fixed mode of meeting the expenses of the school. There is scarcely a neighborhood in this part of the country that has not been embroiled by feuds and bitter animosities by leaving this matter an open question for annual discussion."—*Rev. Duncan Morrison, Beckwith, Lanark County.*

"Give us free schools, and with them we will have peace and harmony throughout."—*Rev. A. Mulock, Fredericksburgh, Frontenac County.*

"Much as the friends of education may desire, and deeply as we may feel an interest in this matter, yet a great deal remains to be done, or our intellectual wants will suffer and languish. Six years' expe-

rience in this department has convinced me, more and more, of the necessity of ample funds, being provided by law, as the scanty remuneration now paid, for the very imperfect services rendered, is of little or no avail."—*John Watson, Esq., Adolphustown, Lennox County.*

"Place education within the reach of all, and then, and not until then, make it imperative on parents and guardians, under penalty, to educate their children or dependants. Has not the time fully come when the legislature should again take action herein, and at once provide for the establishment and maintenance of our common schools, by a general tax on the rateable property of the people."—*Ephraim A. Durham, Richmond, Lennox County.*

"I am sorry to notice, however, that notwithstanding all the efforts put forth, and the encouragement given to educate the young, there are still about four hundred children of the proper age, who attend no school. This is much to be lamented. The only remedy, in my opinion, is the free system."—*Rev. John Armour, Esquesing, Halton County.*

"I am, however, free to say, that so long as a choice between rate bill, subscription, and free school exists, so long as the inhabitants of sections are required to meet annually and vote on the manner in which the schools shall be supported, so long will our schools fail to give that satisfaction to yourself and other well-wishers to the advancement of education, which your and their labors merit. If the present system is intended to extend instruction to all, the school house must be free to all. I take this view from experience. I know this to be the only cause. I feel satisfied that it would double the attendance of children."—*Wm. A. Routh, Stamford, Welland County.*

These are a few examples of the tenor of the general remarks of the Local Superintendents, in favor of free schools and compulsory assessments; amounting, in truth, to a candid acknowledgment that so far as their experience has enabled them to judge, they consider the present school system, without the required compulsory law, to be a failure. Here then, after having first testified, in the most plain and intelligible manner, that the teachers are bad and the schools inefficient, comes the intimation that the remedy is to be sought in the exercise of what all right-minded persons have denounced as unconstitutional, and at variance with our professed principles of municipal government acknowledged by the laws of Canada. Now, if it had so happened that we possessed no examples of free schools supported by compulsory assessments, or, that, where the experiment had been tried, the results had proved satisfactory, no astonishment would be felt at the recommendation of the Local Superintendents to adopt compulsion. But when, on the contrary, we have living examples and official evidence to prove that free schools, notwithstanding the profuse expenditure of municipal funds to their support, are the most inefficient of the two classes of Common Schools, we not only express surprise but also regret that the practical effects of the school system should be so far misapprehended or so little understood. How far this misapprehension may have been occasioned by the way in which the annual general returns are prepared and exhibited, is a legitimate subject of inquiry, for I find in my own analysis of the tabular returns, such deficiencies of necessary information, and so many changes in the matter of the tables, as to render a definite knowledge of particular facts impossible. For example, the number of free schools, &c., contained in table A of the report for 1854, is found in table C of the report for 1855. Then the average attendance, comprised in table B of the previous reports, is wanting in the report for 1855. How then is it possible that any Local Superintendent can learn from the annual general report the comparative conditions of the free and the rate paying schools? What is necessary to be known,

namely, the average attendance, in 1855, is not given. And what is given, the number of free schools, is of no value without a statement of the average attendance. So that notwithstanding the vast importance imputed to free schools, and the space occupied in every annual report, during the last ten years, to extol their merits, no means have ever been furnished by which to get at the facts; no returns are available by which to measure their comparative claims. What is known concerning them has to be got from the January reports of the retiring Boards of School Trustees, published in the local newspapers. Thus, while opinionative remarks, laudatory of free schools, have been set forth in every annual report, the ascertainable and reliable facts, capable of falsifying such opinionative remarks have been either negligently withheld or studiously suppressed. It is no wonder, then, that with ample available evidence to stamp the free schools, as the most inefficient and the most thriftless in the Province, so many Local Superintendents should still be found recommending their adoption.

As the remedy proposed is the only one which, as a last resort, the friends of the present school system are desirous to see tried; and since they assume that it would be an effective panacea for all the existing defects of the system, an examination of the state of the free schools, in localities where they have been long enough in operation and have had the most favorable opportunities for their development, will serve to show how delusive is the notion that their general enforcement would remedy the present condition of the Common Schools and redeem the character of the school system. I shall begin with Toronto, for various reasons. First, because it was among the earliest to try the experiment. Second, because those who presumed to understand the free system best and were its most enthusiastic advocates, were the active spirits in organizing, and managing the Toronto City Free Schools, from their commencement, in 1848, to the present time, a space of 8 years. Third, because the most lavish expenditure has been submitted to, on their account, far exceeding that of any other place. Fourth, because the acting Local Superintendent, G. A. Barber, Esq., who has filled the office for several years, was, from the first, by his experience and business habits, most competent to perform its duties; and by unremitted efforts, through lectures, school visits and personal superintendence, is known to have neglected no opportunity and to have refused no suggestion which could contribute in any measure to their success. Fifth, because being in the vicinity of the Normal School, the best opportunities have been afforded of procuring teachers. And, in the last place, because here, in a particular manner, the greatest exertions have been made, on public occasions, through the press and the machinery connected with the Education Office, to make the free schools of Toronto an example to be followed in other parts of Canada. These are strong reasons, why Toronto is the best place to take, for the purpose of test-

ing the operation and fruits of free schools, supported by compulsory assessment.

The last census shows that the number of children of school age, in the City, is 8,884. And, by Mr. Barber's report for 1855, the average attendance in all the city free schools was 1,570. If the reason is asked, of the great disparity between the number of children in attendance and the number which ought to attend, the answer may be unsatisfactory; but the fact is officially recorded that in a population of 8,884 children of school age, only 1,570 is the average daily attendance. Then, as to the cost of supporting schools for the daily instruction of 1,570 children, I take the figures from Table A of the annual general report of the Chief Superintendent for the year 1855, as follows:—

Paid Teachers' Salaries	£2347	13	5
do For Maps and Apparatus	105	8	5
do For Rents and repairs of School Houses	117	17	7
do For School Books, Stationery, Fuel, and other expenses	3576	7	5
	£6147	6	10
To this amount, add interest, at 6 per cent, on £15,771 13s 4d, the cost of School Houses and Lots, as stated in Mr. Barber's report	946	6	0
	£7093	12	10

The cost then, of a daily attendance of 1,570 children in the Free Common Schools of Toronto is £4 10s. 4d. per head, for the year 1855.*

These are the figures. Now let us see what Mr. Barber says, concerning the actual condition of the schools:

"The records, as to visits to the school, on the part of parents and the public, do not exhibit a very encouraging result. * * * * It is to be deeply regretted that the community in general, but more especially the wealthy and influential, have not manifested a warmer interest in the progress of popular education, inasmuch as the absence of such a feeling *in favor of the City Schools* operates as a great discouragement to their usefulness. Neither can it be said that the parents of the children, who receive the benefits of a free education, at the city school, take anything like the interest they ought to do in a subject which so nearly relates to their own welfare and happiness, through the moral and intellectual training of their children. The want of regularity is a constant source of vexation to their teachers. How can a child be expected to learn anything thoroughly who attends school by fits and starts, present perhaps two or three days in succession, and then absent for several days afterwards? And the want of punctuality in attendance is another serious drawback and great evil, for which parents are entirely to blame."

Now, notwithstanding, that the other illustrations which I mean to give of the working of free schools in other localities are much to the same purport, still it is worthy of remark that the results of the experiment in Toronto are comparatively of greater value, in a statistical point of view, than those of all the other places combined; for the very obvious reason, that this is the stronghold of the persons most competent to carry free schools into operation, and who have proved themselves the most enthusiastic and unscrupulous in the employment of

* Mr. Hill, Recorder of Birmingham, in justifying this mode of computation, remarks: "Just as the carpenter, when he buys his timber, pays an equal price for that portion which he cuts away into useless chips as for that which remains in his finished work; so that the cost of his roof or his floor is not to be calculated simply by the quantity of wood therein found, but by the whole quantity required in its fabrication."

means to secure for them a favorable report. And any unbiassed examiner of the records of our city free schools, for the period of eight years, during which time they have developed all their good and bad capabilities, will necessarily conclude that, with the care evinced, the money expended, the use of every congenial instrumentality, and the favorable circumstances surrounding and pampering them throughout, and their now recorded failure, it is not possible that free schools can succeed anywhere else. In Toronto they have failed. They are past redemption. This fact, the greatest fact in the history of Canadian free schools, must be borne in mind.

The second example is that of the County of Huron. John Nairn, Esq., the Local Superintendent, has been very explicit in reporting, numerically, the school population, the average attendance, and also the comparative attendance in the free and rate bill schools of the county. Mr. Nairn says:—

"The children of school age numbered 7,471—while the number of those on the school registers, or who were entered as scholars, in the whole county, was only 5,172—thus showing that last year there were 2,299 children in the county, that received no education in the national schools. But, although this result is to be deplored, yet still if there was a certainty that five thousand children, as entered in our registers, were getting a proper education, it would tend to diminish our regrets. Such, however, is not the case, for, although entered as scholars, the attendance of many is only for a few days, from which, of course, no benefit can be obtained. This is placed beyond doubt, by the admirable regulations, as to average attendance. As attested by the trustees, the average attendance of the whole schools of the county, was last year 1,801, which gives an average of 25 to each of our 71 schools—a sad evidence of indifference and carelessness on the part of many parents and guardians. But perhaps it may be said, we would have a different result if all our schools were free, and if no rates were exacted. Now, without here expressing any opinion as to the merits of these two modes of supporting schools, it is certain that in this, the rate paying schools, in 1855, produced a larger amount of attendants than the free schools. Thus, we had 44 free schools and 27 rate paying, and by taking the first 25 rate schools—and the first 25 free schools, as entered in any school book—I find the aggregate attendance for the rate schools to be 164,753, and the aggregate attendance for the free schools to be 114,116, giving in favor of the ratepaying, a difference of 50,607"

The annual general report, for 1855, is no farther available, for such information as that furnished by Mr. Barber and Mr. Nairn; and, on account of the Table of the average daily attendance having been discontinued, no approach can be made towards a comparison of the free and rate bill schools in other places. It becomes necessary, therefore, in order to get at the required facts, to go back to 1854, and take the annual general report for that year. But for the reason already stated, that the Table does not define the difference between schools free and partly free, and in most places these two classes of schools, together with those supported by rate bill exist, simultaneously, along side of each other in the same school sections, I am precluded from making use of the mass of examples which otherwise would have been available. I am, therefore, limited, for my illustrations, to those places which are marked in the Table as having all their schools free. Of these I give, here, all that are contained in the annual general report for

1854; and for correctness I include no places which have Catholic Separate Schools.

FREE SCHOOLS.

	Children of School Age.	Registered Attendance.	Daily Attendance.
Hamilton	4326	2290	873
London	3000	1577	625
Simcoe	500	327	146
Berlin	241	226	160
Paris	613	598	266
Preston	320	239	171
Stratford	409	260	121
Trenton	335	308	138
Windsor	246	126	47
Yorkville	340	164	107
	10330	6115	2654

As a contrast to the above I shall now give examples from all the places having exclusively rate bill schools, stated in the annual general report, for the same year 1854; exclusive also of the places having separate Catholic schools; as follows:

RATE BILL SCHOOLS.

	Children of School Age.	Registered Attendance.	Average Daily Attendance.
Bytown	2400	887	635
Cobourg	961	461	289
Port Hope	927	386	192
St. Catharines	1323	509	465
Barrie	400	247	111
Woodstock	661	554	284
Bowmanville	507	332	122
Brampton	272	100	61
Caledonia	262	130	84
Chippewa	342	142	104
Galt	609	584	273
Ingersoll	442	305	127
Oshawa	310	172	137
St. Thomas	393	217	145
Smith's Falls	270	164	113
	10,079	5190	3142

This comparison of these two classes of schools, the first free, the second rate bill, exhibits the largest average attendance, the only correct criterion, to lie on the side of the rate bill schools. No better nor more impartial test can be applied than the one I have here adopted. For I have taken, in the one class, all the places, stated in the report, having none but free schools; and, in the other, all those having none but what are supported by rate bill.

We thus see, by the figures furnished by the Local Superintendents themselves; moreover, by the official and therefore the only admissible data, that the last resort of the Chief Superintendent, and of so many of the Local Superintendents as have echoed the cry for the free school panacea, is fallacious and deceptive.

The extent and mischief of the delusion, can only, however, be

exactly measured and distinctly perceived by comparison of the exorbitant assessments for free schools, and the small expense of those maintained by rate bill. By such further comparison, the climax of the mischief becomes, at once, apparent. The case of Toronto may suffice for this purpose.

I intended, under the treatment of free schools, to dispose of the collateral assumptions concerning compulsory attendance ; but the space already occupied, with the foregoing quotations and remarks, precludes the consideration of this branch of the subject, at this time. But in my next I shall state the reasons why compulsory attendance would be impracticable in Canada; and thereafter, and in the same communication, I shall give the figures showing the gross expense of maintaining the Normal School ; and the cost to the country of the 374 trained teachers employed in 1855.

I have the honor to be, Sir, &c.,

A PROTESTANT.

Toronto, 13th January, 1857.

No. IV.

SIR, — That compulsory attendance should form a necessary sequence of compulsory assessments has lately become a general theme of discussion; and in connection with the criminal jurisprudence of the Province is likely to force itself on the notice of the Government. The progress of crime among the juvenile part of the population of cities, towns, and villages, and inutility of the free schools or the common schools, as a preventive, has effectually destroyed all the fine spun theories and visionary conceptions by which the annual general report for 1850, was, in a particular manner, distinguished. I am not now going to blame Lord Elgin and Dr. Ryerson for the compact formed between them at that time, and by virtue of which a net work the most cunningly devised, the most specious in its outward pretensions, but at the same time the most selfish and egotistical, was spread over the face of the whole Province. The fallacies propagated through and during this copartnership, which has not yet terminated, the means employed for the purpose, the fulsome praises of each other's Herculean educational proportions, and the inflated pretensions concerning *universal education, its broad, vast, gigantic dimensions,* are all things upon record. But, in contrast with theories, when we come now to look, through experience at the fruits of the free schools, and find, on the complaint of the Judges on the Bench, that these schools have failed of accomplishing their professed object, and that the cities and towns are swarming with juvenile criminals, who have never been within the threshold of one of these free schools, I maintain that the Government will be to blame, and that the present Administration will be chargeable with a neglect of the exercise of one of its most important functions if it permit the imposture to be longer continued.

By the free school quackery of 1850, compulsory attendance was to form no part of the programme of the School system which was to educate ALL. Oh, no; this compulsory attendance was repudiated. The magnates who adopted the plan of compulsory assessment, could not perceive that this was only one part of a complete compulsory system, consisting of two parts, which, by nature and reason and equity, could not be separated. They could not see that, on the assumed grounds by which compulsory assessments could be justified, it would

be a violation of justice, to enforce it without its counterpart, compulsory attendance. But let us see what Dr. Ryerson said at that time. I quote from the report for 1850 :—

"The system of free schools makes the best provision and furnishes the strongest inducements for the education of every youth in each School Section of the land. To compel the education of the children, by the terror of legal pains and penalties, is at variance with my ideas of the true method of promoting universal education. * * * While therefore, the quarterly rate bill per pupil is a temptation to each parent to keep his children from the school, the annual school rate upon property furnishes each parent with a corresponding inducement to send his children to school. * * * The facilities thus provided for the education of each child in a School Section, will leave the ignorant, careless or unnatural parent without excuse for the educational neglect of his children. The finger of universal reproof and scorn pointed at him, will soon prove more powerful than statute law, and, without infringing any individual right, will morally compel him, in connexion with higher considerations, to send his children to school."

By this, as well as by the tenor of the whole essay from which this extract is taken, it will be seen, that compulsory attendance was not only declared to be inadmissible, but the reason is stated, because "at variance with my ideas of the true method of promoting universal education." That was said in 1850. What does Dr. Ryerson say in 1857? I here quote from his letter to the Rev. Mr. Bruyere, in the *Leader* of Friday last the 16th current :—

"Based upon the fact, that individual ignorance is a public evil, the state or whole people provide for its removal and prevention by establishing schools for the education of all the children—reserving to their individual parents the supreme control as to their *religious instruction*. But the state or collective people should proceed a step farther, and see, not only that provision is made for the instruction of each child, but that each child should receive somewhere a certain amount or certain period of instruction. * * * This is a power with which the state, through the several municipalities of the land, should be invested—a power with which I proposed to invest them by a draft of bill and communication submitted to Government two years ago."

So that what, in 1850, were at variance with the school architect's infallible ideas of the true method of promoting universal education, are in perfect accordance with his new ideas of promoting universal education in 1857. It unfortunately happened, however, that these erroneous ideas were entertained by one who had no practical knowledge of national systems of education, and that he was permitted by Lord Elgin and by the Canadian Government to propagate them and to act on them, in defiance of the protestations of those who, at that time, exposed their baselessness. And Dr. Ryerson's surrender now of the self-sufficiency of free schools is an admission that they have failed, since the police force is to be called on to compel the children to attend them; and that the pretended universality of the system is a humbug, since the children of respectable parents, on the one hand, and the children of the dangerous class on the other, are equally beyond the pale of its influence. Is not this a pretty pass, a nice predicament in which to find ourselves in 1857, after ten years of bombast and false pretences!

Turning to Judge Hagarty's charge to the grand jury at the open-

ing of the present assizes at Toronto on the 8th of the present month, I perceive that the learned Judge has propounded the true character of free schools, when he says that *the only class of people that property is interested in educating, is the class* most dangerous to the well being of society. It is not to be presumed that this is Judge Hagarty's individual opinion. Enough has been elicited to indicate that the Judges and Magistracy have had this view forced on their attention by the gradual increase of the criminal calendar. And the most reasonable supposition is that, in the present case, Judge Hagarty has simply enunciated what he knows is the general opinion of the Bench and of those connected with the criminal jurisprudence of the Province. Coming from such high authority, it seems as if free schools and compulsory assessments have received a fatal blow; for if the proper and legitimate object of a compulsory assessment is the education of the dangerous class only, what becomes of Dr. Ryerson's ideas about the paramount duty of the state and the subordinate rights of the parent? In my opinion, Judge Hagarty, as representing, in this case, the judicial opinion of the Supreme Tribunals, has knocked the foundation from under the present school system. Take away the assumed right of the state, and the whole fabric tumbles to the ground. Or reduce the free schools to the condition of a machine, subservient to the regular police, and they immediately take rank among the preventives of city nuisances. Hear Judge Hagarty:

"We open our capacious school houses—we provide an effective staff of teachers, but the streets remain infested by hordes of untaught children—the raw material of the future burglar and assassin. It is said, that it would be an interference with rational liberty to enforce attendance at school; the answer seems very reasonable. It would be an interference, but to no greater extent than the compulsory contributions by assessment for school rates. In a well regulated city all nuisances are removable by law. Every citizen has to surrender a certain portion of his freedom of action for the general good. The pool of stagnant water and the pestilential filth-heap, are most justly obnoxious to municipal laws. Families of neglected children growing up in idleness and ignorance, shocking the ear with oaths and indecency, 'whose mouth is full of cursing and deceit, and whose feet are swift to shed blood,' scoffing at the invitation to enter the open gates of the neighbouring school-house, are a far more awful evil and peril to a community than the poisonous cesspool or the offensive drain."

And again, on their specific office as an arm of the police:

"We may moderately assert, that four-fifths of the cost of erecting and maintaining the Common Schools of Toronto, are defrayed by those who do not send their children to them. All rateable property has to contribute, on the principle that it secures full value for the sacrifice in the advancement of general education, and the humanizing effects on the population at large, and the consequent increased security of life and fortune. Few right minded men will dispute the soundness of the proposition, if the result be as above. * * * It is notorious to all who observe such matters, that, even during school hours the streets are infested by numbers of children—that the air is polluted by the mingled blasphemy and filth that we shudder to hear proceeding from infant childish lips. That at any hour of the day, if an accident happen in the highway, or a fire takes place, the crowd is always more than half composed of idle children who should properly be at the moment at school. In short, do the great mass of the Ratepayers of Toronto, who do not desire to send their children to those Free Schools, derive any return or value at all commensurate with the expenditure they are assessed to pay? An ulcer is eating into the vitals of our social system in the shape of crowds of people growing up in neglect and ignorance rapidly ripening into crime, many of them destined to form the chief population hereafter of our Gaols and Penitentiaries.

* * * * Once it is conceded, as I fear it must be, that the class most dangerous to the well-being of society does not, in fact, avail itself of the high privileges of free education, the argument appears reduced to a very intelligible state. Property is compelled to provide for others the means of enjoying this blessing—the only class of people that property is practically interested in educating, is not compelled to accept, and exercises its right of rejecting the boon. But it seems a very plain proposition that, co-extensive with the legal obligations *to teach* should be the legal obligation *to be taught.* * * * * With some enactment of this nature (a police officer to look after vagrant children), and a suitable Reformatory Institution for young criminals, which every large town for its own safety should possess, our Free School system might be made a mighty engine for softening and civilizing our loose street population."

No one objects to free schools, in connection with a House of Industry or a Reformatory establishment, and as an arm of the police. For the security of life, person and property, the education of the dangerous class is a wise precaution, to which no property-holder would for a moment object. But here comes another incongruity of the present School system. Dr. Ryerson says that two years ago he drafted a bill which was to invest the State with power to compel attendance at school. Had that bill become law what would have been the consequences? First, the vagrant children picked off the streets would have been placed under a class of secular and irreligious instructors for whom they could have no respect; and whom, under the attendant circumstance of coercion, they could regard in no other light than a subordinate class of criminal officers. Second, the announcement that the schools were to be filled with the young vagrants, swept off the streets, would have driven away a great number of laborers' and tradesmens' children who at present make up the school population. One or other, or both of these consequences must necessarily have been realized; a clear proof that the free schools, as they are at present organized, notwithstanding that they serve admirably the interests of a class of persons who are able but are too mean to pay for the education of their children, would be ill adapted to the purpose for which Judge Hagarty says free schools are specially designed.

With reference to his draft of a bill Dr. Ryerson says, "reserving to their individual parents the supreme control as to their *religious instruction.*" He could not have intended that the measure of compulsory attendance should be directed to the only class of children requiring such coercive treatment; for such children have no religious parents. The only inference, therefore, is, that sensible of the inadequacy of the free system and influenced by the general complaints of the Local Superintendents, his single object was to get the aid of the law to do what the system could not do of itself, namely, to fill the free schools with other children than those which property is interested in educating. This would have been a most tyrannical act, and for this reason it is to be presumed the Legislature did not see fit to adopt it. But let us look at its meaning. A respectable tradesman or other person has six children, for whose early moral training and consequent future walk in life he is solicitous; and governed by this motive, and

knowing the promiscuous assemblage of the free school room, and the doubtful or questionable characters of many of the pupils, he declines to send his children to these free schools. But as it does not necessarily follow that his children shall go uneducated; and acting prudently, as his means and circumstances will permit, he sends alternately, a few at a time to a private school of his own choice, pays with a spirit of independence for the instruction they receive, and, when at home, sees that they revise their previous lessons so that they may not be forgotten. This is the common course adopted by parents in ordinary circumstances. Now fancy Doctor Ryerson's draft of a bill having become law; such a parent as I have described would be constrained to send his six children to a private school, a thing which his circumstances and means could not honestly afford, or he would be compelled to send them to the free school. There would have been no alternative. The feelings of the parent would have been outraged, and either his means would have been crippled or his children would have been undergoing a course of free school demoralization. But what would this have availed to the drafter of the bill? What signified the rights of the parent, the comfort of the domestic circle, and the inception of vicious habits by the children, compared with the rights of the State, the education of ALL, and the filling of the empty free school-houses by means of the arm of the law! But would such a law have been practicable? Does Dr. Ryerson really imagine that it could have been enforced?* Is this not another proof of the visionary bent of Dr.

* The following results of the Conference, on Preventive and Reformatory Schools, held in Birmingham on the 9th and 10th of December, 1851, will serve to throw some light on this subject:

"The children whose condition requires the notice of the conference, are: Those who have not yet subjected themselves to the grasp of the law, but whom, by reason of the vice, neglect, or extreme poverty of their parents, are inadmissible to the existing school establishments, and consequently must grow up without any education; almost inevitably forming part of the 'perishing and dangerous classes,' and ultimately becoming criminal: 2. Those who are already subjecting themselves to police interference, by vagrancy, mendicancy, or petty infringement of the law: 3. Those who have been convicted of felony, or such misdemeanor as involves dishonesty.

The provisions to be made for these three classes, are: For the first, free day schools: for the second, industrial feeding schools, with compulsory attendance: for the third, penal reformatory schools.

"The legislative enactments needed to bring such schools into operation, are: For the free day schools, such extension of the present governmental grants, from the committee of Council on Education, as may secure their maintainance in an effective condition, they being by their nature at present excluded from aid, yet requiring it in a far higher degree than those on whom it is conferred: For the industrial feeding schools, authority to magistrates to enforce attendance at such schools, on children of the second class, and to require payment to the supporters of the school for each child from the parish in which the child resides, with a power to the parish officer to obtain the outlay from the parent, except in cases of inability: For the penal reformatory schools, authority to magistrates and judges to commit juvenile offenders to such schools instead of to prison, with power of detention to the governor during the appointed period, the charge of maintainance being enforced as above."

On this occasion and with reference to the mixing of vagrant and respectable children in the same schools, the Chairman of the Conference, M. D. Hill, Esq, Recorder of Birmingham, a most experienced and competent authority, submitted a mass of information derived from his own practical knowledge. The following extract, from Mr. Hill's voluminous address, deserves to be well weighed:—

"The perishing and dangerous classes of society consist of a numerous and increasing body of young persons, who are being trained in a way they should not go; by some, they are called the Arabs of the streets; by others, the outcasts of society; by others again, human vermin. However designated, the terms employed make it manifest that they are sometimes objects of fear, sometimes of aversion, often of pity; that they are not of society, but somehow for its misfortunes interwoven with it. It is this class which forms the head-spring of that ever-flowing river of crime, which spreads its corrupt and

Ryerson's natural genius; and is it not sufficient, coupled with his other educational precedents and eccentricities, to open the eyes of the Government to the danger of continuing the management of our educational interests in such hands?

Without religious instruction and pastoral supervision, the secular teaching might sharpen the animal instincts and add dexterity to young minds already sufficiently quickened by early predatory training; but it could only be to make them more successful adepts in their future career of crime; for it is a settled maxim in criminal jurisprudence, that secular teaching is not capable by itself, however well it may be suited in conjunction with and under the influence of religious and industrial agencies, to reclaim the number of unfortunate children who constitute a dangerous nuisance in every city. Yet in the free schools, these children were, by the proposed bill, to learn only secular knowledge. Religious training they could not have had, because they had no religious parents; and the teacher would not have been allowed to teach religion, because the law would not acknowledge him in any other than a secular capacity. So that religious training could not have been given.

If now we look at Dr. Ryerson's draft of a bill, as intended for all other classes equally with the dangerous class; and at Judge Hagarty's position, that such measure should coerce the dangerous class exclusively, it becomes evident that Doctor Ryerson either mistakes or affects to mistake Judge Hagarty's meaning when he says, with reference to the compulsory power with which his bill was to have invested the

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corrupting waters through the land. It can not be dried up. It has never yet been purified. Nor indeed, have any well-directed efforts, at all commensurate with the magnitude of the evil, ever been instituted. It therefore becomes of the very deepest importance, not only with regard to the temporal and eternal happiness of that particular class, but for the safety of all, old and young, high and low, rich and poor, that the state of neglect and mistaken treatment in which these miserable beings are found, should cease to exist. * * * * By respectable classes of society, I take not into consideration, when I employ the term, whether the individual is rich or poor. I call that man a respectable father, whatever may be his station, who is imbued with a right sense of responsibility to God and his children; who cares incessantly for their welfare; and who, while before all things he values a religious and moral training, yet also desires instruction for them in such branches of knowledge as will enable them to fight their way through the compe ition which besets every path in life. But the class we have in view is deeply below this. The poor but respectable man who discharges his duty to the best of his ability, is far above the negligent parent, and infinitely above the perverting parent, who wilfully abuses his charge. The difference between the highest in the realm and the lowest is measurable; but the difference between the respectable father and the man who corrupts his child is immeasurable, and consequently infinite. Now, the fact is, that these two classes cannot be brought into connection in schools. It is a curious circumstance that the objection does not come so much from the higher class as from the lower. The children of that lower class will not place themselves in a position to be looked down upon, as they call it. Their love of education and training is not strong enough to overcome this objection; and you cannot persuade them to enter the national schools. But if you could it would be far from expedient to exert such an influence, because these poor creatures possess great powers for mischief. Thrown upon their own resources they have learned self-reliance; they despise all restraint, both for themselves and others; and they would become the most dangerous leaders into evil courses, and the most fatal seducers of the better trained children, who, brought up under the eye of their parents, have not at their early age the power of self-government to resist the seduction. But there is an advantage to the better class in making distinct schools for this lower branch. Take these children away from the streets; let them no longer infest the path of the good man's child, and you destroy the danger which, I can tell those who are unacquainted with their humbler neighbors, weighs heavily on the minds of parents in the respectable class, keeps them in fear and trembling, lest their children should be corrupted by evil companions."

State, "a power which has lately been suggested by two Judges of the Supreme Courts—the one in a recent address to a Grand Jury." Now there is no resemblance whatever in the two powers. Dr. Ryerson's was to affect the whole population, for the purpose of filling the empty school-houses. Judge Hagarty's was to affect only the dangerous class, for the purpose of preventing the alarming increase of crime.

Assuming that our constituted authorities will follow up the movement which has been begun, and insist on the connection of compulsory attendance with compulsory assessments, the next step will be, either to convert the secular into a religious system, in order to meet the requirements of a class of vagrant children who have no religious parents, and for whom the state is bound to make some religious educational provision; or limit the free schools, and repeal so much of the Common School Act as to make free schools and compulsory attendance available only for the education of the absolutely poor, who have no means to pay for education, or whose degraded circumstances and unconsciousness of moral responsibility make them fit objects of charity and protection. As stated by Judge Hagarty, property is interested in the education of the dangerous class only. Therefore property cannot be justly assessed for the education of any other class; the other classes being able to pay for their own education. By this process of reasoning, it is evident, that free schools, beyond the requirements of the dangerous class, is an infringement of the rights of property and, as a necessary corollary, that the free school system, as it now exists in Canada, is unjust and a tyrannical unsurpation. With this legal view, the reasonable inference is that the legislature will have to disallow free schools, farther than they may be necessary, to a limited extent, in cities, as auxiliaries to the prevention of crime. The clearness with which Judge Hagarty has explained the principle on which free schools are admissible, and the point beyond which their further extension becomes a violation of the rights of the citizen, places the subject in a light to dispel all doubt where such might previously have existed.

Reviewing now the ground which has been traversed, in my four communications. On the one hand, the statements of the annual general reports of the Chief Superintendent, all framed to impress the reader and to lead to the belief that the schools are prosperous, the teachers are efficient, and the Normal School is supplying the country with an excellent staff of teachers. On the other, the universal complaints of the Local Superintendents, directly falsifying the statements and assertions of the said annual general reports; the call for a compulsory assessment law, as a remedy; the, comparatively, inferior condition of the free schools; the abnormal state of the Normal school; and, finally, the alarming increase in the number of juvenile criminals; the contrast presented fully bears out my argument that the ascertained facts being the opposite of what the Government and the country are

led to believe by the published statements and official reports of the Chief Superintendent, the time has arrived when the school system should be brought to account, should be made the subject of rigid parliamentary investigation, and should be dealt with in accordance with the disparity between its written pretensions and practical demerits.

In my second letter, which contained a statement of the number of Normal school trained teachers employed in 1855, compared with the whole number so employed in that year, the startling disclosure was made that 1,318 who had been so trained, 855 of whom are reported to have received certificates of competency to teach, only 374 were following the profession; and that consequently 944 trained, or 481 holding certificates, had deserted and betaken themselves to other employments. These desertions being a serious affair, both in a pecuniary point of view and in their effect on the condition of the schools, it is proper that the extent of the mischief should be exactly measured, so that it may be sufficiently understood. Taking the 374 teachers employed, in 1855, as the produce of something more than eight years' labor, their cost to the Province may be acertained by the expenditure during these years. By the official returns, the following is the amount:—

EXPENSE OF THE NORMAL SCHOOL.

1847.	Government grant.....	£1,500
1848.	Do do.....	1,500
1849.	Do do.....	1,500
1850.	Do do.....	2,500
1851.	Do do.....	2,500
1852.	Do do.....	2,500
1853.	Do do.....	3,050
1854.	Do do.....	3,050
1855.	Do do.....	3,050
		£21,150
Four years' interest on £25,000, the cost of ground and building, at 6 per cent. - - - - - - - -		6,000
		£27,150

This sum, £27,150, divided by 374, the number of teachers, makes the cost of each, to the Provincial revenue, £72 11s. 10d. This, be it observed, does not include the annual grant of £500 for a Normal school library and museum; nor the moiety of the annual salaries of the Chief Superintendent, the Deputy, and a clerk, amounting to £1,475; nor any portion of the annual expenditure of the printing and publishing business.

This, £27,150, is a large sum to expend on producing 374 teachers; but it looks more so still when we consider the low standing of these teachers. The returns, for 1855, state that this 374 includes 356 holding provincial certificates, granted by the Chief Superintendent since the year 1842, and 18 holding certificates granted by the Masters of the Normal School prior to that date. We have no means of ascertaining the standing and character of the 18; but the 356 are classified as follows:

First Class,		Second Class,	
Male	58	Male	123
Female	54	Female	121
	112		244

As the Normal School grants only two classes of certificates, the above shows a large proportion, fully more than two thirds, whose attainments are of a very inferior nature, being fitted only for the most inferior grade of schools. These 244, however, equally with the 58 first class male teachers, cost the Province, on the lowest calculation £72 11s. 10d. each, exclusive of other items of expenditure such as I have noticed.

The evil does not stop here. These 374 teachers may all abandon the profession to-morrow, as many of them are doing every day, and there is no Provincial redress The returns show that 375 Normal School trained teachers were employed in 1854, and during that year 45 more had received certificates, making 420 who should have been employed in the following year 1855. Yet we find by the returns for 1855 that only 374 had been employed; showing in that one year 46 desertions. I am desirous of pressing on the notice of the Government this, the most defective feature of the whole Common School system; for the leakage lies concealed. The public mind has no consciousness of the imposition which has been practiced year after year, consecutively, during the nine years the Normal School has been in operation. No means have been adopted to check its growth; no measure has even been suggested to arrest its continuance. The leakage is carefully concealed by the arrangement of the Tables and the General Abstract; it is wrapped up in the most profound obscurity; while the Chief Superintendent every year officially reports what he knows to be untrue, and so late as last year repeats, in his report for 1855, that "The efficiency of the Normal School has, in every respect been maintained, and in some respects I think improved."

The importance of this branch of the subject will occasion my continuing it in my next communication.

I have the honor to be, Sir, &c.,

A PROTESTANT.

Toronto, January 20, 1857.

No. V.

SIR,—The estimation in which Normal training is held by the best practical educationists, by the statesmen and by the governments of Europe, as an indispensable and the most vital part of a common school system, is the result of a long and varied series of experiments, conducted in different countries, under different forms of government, and, altogether, under the most dissimilar classes of circumstances. The initiatory steps for the adoption of Normal training, in each particular case, will be found, on examination, to have been conducted with direct and exclusive reference to what had been done practically in other countries. If there is one feature, more than another, which makes the European experiments valuable, and entitles them to our confidence, as guides to be followed, it is the rigid exclusion of everything which is not strictly practical, and which has not been thoroughly tested in every one of its methods of application. In Germany, Switzerland, France and the Northern and Southern nations, the histories of their common schools are signalized, in a most remarkable manner, for the extent to which the respective governments, have made them objects of paramount concern, and the extent to which their organization and subsequent management have been entrusted to the ablest, the most distinguished and most practical statesmen of each country. To our American notions it may appear strange that in countries having the most despotic forms of government, equal if not greater solicitude is evinced in promoting the education of the poor, or what is called "the common people" as in others having democratic institutions. Our surprise ceases, however, when we become informed that the motive is the prevention of pauperism and crime, and their attendant expense and inconvenience. In free Switzerland and despotic Austria the motive is the same. The first school of Pestialozzi at Stanz was for pauper children; and that of Fallenberg at Hofyl, of Vehrli at Kruitzlingen, as well as the common schools of Austria, were established expressly for the poor. The education of the children of the poorer classes having become a state necessity, it has, therefore, received the same amount of attention which has been bestowed on other departments of the public service in all these countries. In no case do we find a government in

Europe handing over, unconditionally, an important department of its administration to an obscure dissenting preacher who had never filled any public office. Popular education is, there, taken hold of and treated in the same way as every other great public interest. Its management is confided to the functionaries in the state. This will account for the practical caracter which popular education has assumed, the absence of change, the definiteness of the school laws, the harmony of the religious bodies, and the universally acknowledged efficiency of the schools. One example of the strictly practical spirit by which European statesmen have been governed, will illustrate what is common to them all. The philosophical Guizot, when introducing, in 1832, to the Chamber of Deputies, his Common School Bill, founded on the Prussian system, said :

"In framing this bill, it is experience, and experience alone, that we have taken for our guide. The principles and practice recommended have been supplied to us by facts. There is not one part of the mechanism which has not been worked successfully."

Indeed the business-like manner in which elementary education is organized and conducted on the Continent of Europe, and the certainty of the results calculated to proceed from the means used, are things of which, in America, we entertain a very inadequate and, in most cases erroneous conception. The same may be said with reference to our estimate of what has been done by voluntary efforts, of late years, in England and Scotland, and our misapprehension no less of the motives by which those efforts have, in the first instance, been prompted, as of the fitness of the machinery which has been applied. The emphatic language of M. Guizot is equally that of the patrons of the many private institutions established for the education and reformation of poor children ; so thoroughly are the means made subservient to the end to be accomplished.

As elementary education in Europe, is, thus, a concern of the state for the purpose of preventing pauperism and its attendant crimes and inconveniences, the character of the teacher, with respect to his fitness to do the work required is as much a matter of public concern as that of a revenue or military officer. While the latter mentioned functionaries are subjected to specific modes of discipline to qualify them for the proper performance of the duties of their respective offices, the teachers, with equal care, are trained in normal seminaries. These seminaries are consequently regarded as the principal part of the whole of the primary educational machinery ; and, as such, are constructed and organized with as much regard to immediate practical utility as a custom house or arsenal. And hence the reason why no teacher who has been trained in a government Normal school, can lawfully abandon the profession of teaching until he shall have served a specified number of years, or shall have indemnified the state for the expense which his training had incurred. Thus, we see, that the whole machinery is

constructed in conformity with a preconceived plan, as perfect in theory, and as exact in the adaptation of its parts as it is possible for human ingenuity to contrive. The thorough comprehension of its aim and suitableness has made its adoption rapid and general, independent of the greatest dissimilarity of circumstances. In England, unfortunately, the dominancy of the Church and the mistaken opposition of the Nonconformists have proved a formidable barrier to its introduction ; but these obstacles are not insurmountable, and the day is not far distant when the continental system of elementary schools will form the basis of an English system. Its merits are fully appreciated by the leading members of both the Lords and Commons, and its acceptability to a large portion of the most intelligent of the English people is visible, in the constitution and regulations of the various poor and industrial schools and reformatory establishments, supported partly by voluntary and partly by government aid ; all of which are acknowledged by their founders and patrons to have been framed on the plan of the continental primary schools.

Now keeping in view the European idea of Normal school training, my present object is to show the incorrectness of the assertion that, in the eclecticism of our school system the plan of our Normal School, as stated by Dr. Ryerson, was borrowed from Germany. I propose to prove, by the facts, not only that this assertion is not correct, but also, that when Dr. Ryerson departed on his educational tour, in 1845, he carried with him a belief that the summit of educational perfection had been attained in the State of Massachusetts ; that, while travelling in Europe, the want of the necessary educational qualifications constrained him to consult United States School guides for the facts of the European schools ; and that he returned to Canada as destitute of a knowledge of the principles of European elementary education, of the key to the comprehension of its basis and entire superstructure, as the day on which he departed. Under other circumstances, I should refer with reluctance to errors and deficiencies which might be considered excusable, to a certain extent, in the incumbent of a new office ; but what I regard as an incorrigible state of mental blindness, and a consequent continuous persistence in the promulgation of groundless assumptions, are not to be tolerated while a means for their counteraction is available ; least of all when their tendency is to disseminate error and, under a veil of sophistry, to prevent the truth from appearing. I believe, as I shall prove in what follows, that Dr. Ryerson is as unconscious, at the present moment, of the aim and adaptation of means, of the European elementary schools, as on the day when he first received his appointment as Chief Superintendent of Common Schools. I do not blame him for this ignorance ; and, therefore, it is not so much on this account that I object to his school theories. That which is most objectionable is the habit of asserting and repeating officially, as dogmata, what are not capable of inspection, and cannot be defended

by fair means. The force of what I here remark is not less clearly demonstrated in what has been officially asserted on the head of Normal Schools than on other disputed points. In the annual report for 1850, discoursing on the four sources from which the four leading features of our Common School system were derived, Dr. Ryerson stated that the system of training teachers and the principles and modes adopted in the Normal School here were derived from Germany. The essay in which this statement appeared was published again in the annual report for 1852. Now if I shall show that the Normal School, in Toronto, has not one feature in common with any institution of the kind existing in Germany; but, on the contrary, that each one of its features is a *fac simile* of a corresponding feature of the Massachusetts Normal Schools; and farther, if I shall prove that, in Germany, these schools answer every purpose for which they are designed, while in Massachusetts and Canada they have never done so and there is no prospect that they will ever do so in any one particular, the conviction will surely become manifest, that our educational course has been one of blindness, ignorance and stupidity; that in place of seeking for facts and profiting by the successfully elaborated experience within our reach, we have been dreaming, we have been theorizing, and at the present time are vainly trying to nurse a decrepid bantling of democracy, imported from the adjoining States, believing it to be the offspring of a sturdy Teutonic parentage. For the sake of comparison I shall classify the distinguishing features of these different kinds of Normal Schools under separate heads.

1. *The object which they are to serve.*—This first feature determines the character of all the others. In short the constitution of the governing bodies, the religious provisions, the curriculum, the period of training, and the securities for teachers continuing in the profession, are governed by it. It is the key of the whole system. By understanding this thoroughly, at the outset, no difficulty is experienced in comprehending the correspondence of the machinery employed. This object, not only in Germany but also in Europe, as I have already stated, is the prevention of pauperism and its accompaniment crime, by providing the means by which the poorer classes may become possessed of industrious habits.

As to the fact, that the city Police is chiefly engaged in bringing to punishment a class of persons who have had no educational training in youth, and that the occupants of prisons and penitentiaries are almost exclusively of this class, our own experience in Canada is itself satisfactory, setting aside the examples of older countries where the people is more densely congregated. The records of the Toronto Police Court and Jail, exhibit the fact, that the criminals in this city, old and young, are from the poorer classes. Not, be it observed, the absolutely pauper class; but from the class of mechanics and tradesmen as well as that of laborers; and that their education and training had been so neglected

that comparatively few have been reported able to read, and fewer still possessed of any other indication of parental care. These Police and Jail records mark, properly, the limit to which, but within which, the Municipalities and the general Government should be required, for the purpose of self-protection, to provide the means of education, by compulsory assessment, by compulsory attendance, or its equivalent, and by a trained body of teachers. A delineation such as this is, in miniature, precisely what exists on a national scale in Europe.

Now as to the kind of education: In Germany and Europe it is elementary and industrial. It is expressly provided by the Normal School regulations, and pervades the whole atmosphere of the training of teachers, that the book learning and intellectual instruction are at all times and on all occasions understood to be subservient to the formation of industrial habits, agricultural or mechanical; and to be directed not in such a way as to puff up the mind of the recipient with false notions of the purpose of education, not to estrange him or make him dissatisfied with his position in life, but to form habits for manual labor, to form a character that will fit the future husbandman, citizen, parent, to fill his place in the social economy; so that while the peace of society is secured, his own happiness is the consequence of early industrial habits that continue, with age, to become more firmly rooted."*

No specific object, such as this, is assumed by either the Canadian or Massachusetts school authorities. But in its stead they lay down the rule that *universal education* is the duty of the state; that every child

* The following remarks of Mr. Joseph Kay, though made with reference to Switzerland, are identically the same as those applied by him to Prussia, Germany, and the Continent generally:—"I was assured by the priests in one canton, and by the Protestant clergy in the other, that they were fully convinced that no efforts on their part could insure good masters, unless they were aided by a sufficiently long religious, intellectual and domestic training, under the eye of experienced and trustworthy professors. * * * All with whom I conversed assured me, that their experience had taught them that three years were absolutely necessary for the education of a master; that wherever less time had been tried, it had always been found insufficient; and in order that even three years should suffice, it was necessary that the young man entering the Normal School should have completed his education in the primary schools. * * * He is never allowed to lose sight of the manner of life of the class from which he was selected, and with which he is afterwards required to associate. He is never allowed to forget that he is a peasant, so that he may not afterwards feel any disquiet in mingling with peasants. In this manner, they train their teachers in habits of thought and life admirably suited to the laborious character of the profession for which they are destined, and to the humble class who will be their companions in after life. The higher the instruction that is given to a pupil teacher, the more difficult and the more important it is to cherish his sympathies for the humble and often degraded class among whom he will be called to live and exercise his important duties. In fact, as all the Swiss educators said, the great difficulty in educating a teacher of the poor is to avoid, in advancing his intelligence and elevating his religious and moral character, raising his tastes and feelings so much above the class from which he has been selected, and with which he is called upon afterwards to associate, as teacher, adviser and friend, as to render him disgusted with his humble companions, and with the toilsome duties of his profession. In educating the teachers, therefore, far above the peasant class whom they are intended to instruct, the Swiss cantons which I have mentioned are very careful to continually habituate them to the simplicity and laborious character of the peasant's life, so that when they leave the Normal Schools, they find they have changed from a situation of humble toil to one of comparative ease. They do not therefore become dissatisfied afterwards with their laborious employments, but are accustomed even from their childhood to combine a high development of the intellect and a great elevation of the character with the simplicity and drudgery of a peasant's occupations. Thus, the Swiss schoolmasters live in their villages as the coadjutors of the clergy, associating with the labors of their homes and their firesides, whilst at the same time they exhibit to them the highly beneficial and instructive example of Christian-minded, learned and gentle peasants, living proofs of the benefits to be derived from possessing a properly-educated mind."

born into the world is entitled to an education at the expense of the state; that free education should be provided for ALL, for the purpose of developing all the faculties and making intellectual citizens of what would otherwise be plain home-spun farmers and mechanics. There is no limitation, as to particular classes; no circumstances admitted, to entitle one class more than another to the privilege of free education. Universality is the rule; exceptions are excluded; because they say that the parental duties of the state are equally so to ALL, and one of its most important duties is to elevate the intelligence of its citizens to the highest standard of which humanity is susceptible, so as to impress alike the pupils and the teachers that theirs is a superior, not an inferior, destiny; that they ought all to aspire to "live by their wits," and not by the drudgery of agriculture, mechanics, or the humble school routine. With such a vague and Utopian idea of the relations of society, the consequences, as to school regulations and their administration, are only what might reasonably be expected.

Now, it will be perceived that, in one case, state elementary education is limited to one class of the people, for a specifically-defined object, which is preventive. In the other it has no limitation, but is the patrimony of ALL, the object being to develope and elevate the faculties of all the citizens alike, without distinction. The difference in the train of consequences which characterize the one, compared with those which proceed from the other, will be seen in what follows.

2. *Their Government.*—In Germany, the great value set on early religious training, has occasioned the Normal Schools, equally with the whole system of elementary education, to be placed in a great measure under the immediate control of the ecclesiastical authorities. By the law of Protestant Prussia—

"The provincial consistories (lay bodies) have the immediate surveillance of all the Normal Schools in the different departments of their respective provinces; and the provincial ecclesiastical authorities have the special surveillance of the religious instruction of their respective sects."

The influence of the clergy is not however engrossed by one particular denomination. There is no exclusion of particular sects. Neither is there dominancy of one sect over another. There is no law that the religion of the schools is that common to all denominations of Christians; by which is meant deism; and by means of which, practical religion may be discarded. The Protestant and Catholic Churches are on an equal footing in the eye of the law, in school matters, the same concern being evinced for the establishment and support of Protestant and Catholic Normal Schools, without reference to peculiarities of creed. In Catholic Austria, the liberality of the government, in elementary school affairs, is as great as in any part of Germany. The following, from Turnbull's work on Austria, is an example:

"To the *Episcopal consistories*, headed by the bishop, is committed the general supervision of all the scholastic concerns of the diocese, the regulations of matters of discipline, the communication of instruction

and the investigation of delinquencies. * * * * For the professors of non-Romanist creeds, these respective functions are discharged, in their several gradations, by officers of their own persuasion. The Protestant seniors and superintendents are the district inspectors and the provincial inspectors general for their respective communities ; and the functions of the diocesan consistories are transferred to the central Calvinistic and Lutherean consistories at Vienna."

In Austria the Jews have the entire management, in like manner, of their elementary schools ; and have also a Normal School, at Prague, for the training of teachers in the Jewish faith. In Hanover, likewise, besides Protestant and Catholic Normal Schools, there is one for Jews, established in 1848. Of Catholic Bavaria, Mr. Kay says :

"I visited a priest, who directed one of the large educational establishments in the city. He told me that they had established eight Normal Colleges, in Bavaria, for the education of teachers, and that two of these had been especially set apart for the education of Protestant teachers. He seemed to make very light of all difficulties arising from religious differences, and spoke of education as of a national work, which it was necessary to accomplish, by the joint efforts of all religious parties."

The state of Wirtemberg is equaly impartial ; the Protestant and Catholic church authorities supervising and directing their respective elementary schools, aided by the government. The law in this State provides that sixty families of any religious faith, may establish a separate school at the expense of the whole community. Baden likewise makes no partial distinction between Protestants and Catholics ; their respective Normal Schools being aided by the government.

Throughout the whole German nation there is one exception, and only one, to this universal toleration of all religious sects. Holland, governed by its strong Calvinistic feeling, supports only Protestant schools. And for the purpose of making them acceptable to Catholics, Jews and other bodies, or rather inducing children of these persuasions to attend them, the law prescribes that the children of proscribed persuasions may absent themselves at the school hours when the Calvanistic Catechism is taught, and other religious instruction is given. This, however, is not the German system, nor does it exist in any other part of Europe.

The governing power in Germany, though, in its details, under the immediate practical management of the various religious authorities, is at the same time under the direct supervision of the respective governments. The religious communions are unrestricted. Each carrying on the work of education in its own way. The interference of the State being limited to the enforcement of education by proper means ; and the distribution of the annual appropriations, for that purpose, from the public revenue.

The total exclusion of doctrinal teaching from the Common Schools, before its adoption in Canada, existed, therefore, no where except in the United States. It originated in Massachusetts and was the natural upgrowth of the religious peculiarities of the people of Boston. It might reasonably be supposed that a system from which doctrinal religion is excluded would also exclude doctrinal teachers from its management.

Such, however, is not the case. The semblance of religion, it appears, has been deemed politic ; and however anomalous it may seem to those who think that the parts of a system should correspond, the governing power of the schools of Massachusetts is in the hands of a Baptist preacher, assisted by a Board of Education, of which he is Secretary ; while in Western Canada the supreme control, with a special provision of non-responsibility to the people's representatives in Parliament, is entrusted, in like manner, to a Methodist preacher ; the appendage of a Council of Public Instruction, being to all appearance more a semblance of usefulness than a reality.

The governing power, here and in Massachusetts, is, thus, an essentially exclusive power ; is exercised by extreme sectarians, under an express understanding and condition that, in the performance of their official duties and throughout their entire connection with the schools, they shall act and conduct themselves as persons possessed of no particular religious faith. Is this species of a governing power derived from Germany ?

I have the honor to be, Sir,

A PROTESTANT.

Toronto, 27th January, 1857.

No. VI.

SIR,—The concluding part of my last letter, on the government of Normal Schools, was illustrative of the independent action, in Europe, of each religious body, and the prohibition, in America, of any religious distinction. On this head I may remark, further, that the supreme control exercised, in the former case, through a Cabinet Minister and a staff of state inspectors, while it is limited to the financial condition of the schools and the character of the teachers, has nothing to do with the subsidiary management, which is altogether in the hands of the clergy and householders of each commune. Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, by law act in school matters independent of each other. Each denomination has its own Normal Schools, its own Common Schools, its own doctrinal religious instruction, and its own religious form of school government. Except where the communes are poor and thinly settled, and cannot maintain more than one school ; in which case the religion of the majority is the religion of the school room ; dissentients being permitted to absent themselves during the hours the doctrinal instruction is given. The schools are, thus, sectarian, the religious instruction is doctrinal, and consequently the schools belonging to each religious persuasion are under the immediate charge of the clergy and congregations of that persuasion. This is as it should be. For if the pastor is the religious adviser of the elders and heads of his congregation, in all matters of moral training of youth, their educational duties and responsibilities cannot be separated. The congregation and the pastor should, therefore, work together. So it is throughout the whole of Germany. The experiment going on here, of one sect tyrannizing over all others, had been tried in Germany and has been long since abandoned. The history and final issue of the feuds occasioned by it, furnish a lesson that should have precluded the vain attempt to establish religious tyranny in Canada. Unfortunately, however, in this as in too many other examples, the exclusiveism of our school authorities has blinded them to the value of foreign experience and the inception of whatever savors of a foreign element. Referring to the ordeal through which the German school system passed, before the recognition of its present tolerant principles, Mr. Joseph Kay, a high educational authority says :—

"Bigotry and ignorance have cried their loudest; Romanists have refused co-operation with Protestants, Protestants with Romanists, and yet they have co-operated. There has been the same strong jealousy of all government interference, the same undefined and undigested love of liberty, and there has been the same selfish fear of retarding the development of physical resources. In Bavaria, the war has been waged between Romanists and Protestants; in Argovia, opposition has been raised by the manufacturers; in Lucerne, by the religious parties, and by the political opponents of the government; and, in Baden, the difficulties have been aggravated by the number of Jews, whom both Romanists and Protestants hated to receive into alliance, even more than they disliked to co-operate among themselves. But, in all these countries the great principle has finally triumphed; and all parties have yielded some little of their claims, in the full conviction, that a day is dawning upon Europe, fraught with the most overwhelming evils for that country which has not prepared for its approach."

Canada, while ignoring the experience of old countries, has been battling during the last ten years, to do what had been abandoned in Germany as impracticable. It is only now that the Judges of the higher Courts, and the Police Magistrates, by their reports of the alarming increase of crime, have roused public attention to the consequences of our educational egotism or stupidity. With the example, besides, of Belgium before our eyes, the crusade of the Calvinists in school matters, their final overthrow and the consequent triumph of liberty of all creeds and religious communions, some caution should have been exercised before adopting a course so strikingly analogous as ours promises to be.

It is not enough, however, to point out and define minutely what has been accomplished successfully elsewhere, as the fruit of a series of conflicting experiments; and the error on our part, in not having availed ourselves of a knowledge of these experiments. The cause of this negligence ought to be ascertained; for no advance towards reformation can possibly take place, until the first and progressive steps, which have occasioned the abnormal state of the Common Schools, are clearly and satisfactorily explained. I stated in my last letter that Dr. Ryerson, to whom was intrusted the organization of Common Schools for Western Canada, notwithstanding his visit to Europe for the purpose of information, returned to this Province without having perceived the object which in Europe elementary or Common Schools are specially designed to serve. I stated, farther, that the misapprehension of this first feature, the principal feature, of European elementary education, must necessarily have led to a misunderstanding of the adaptation of its several parts. The perusal of the first report, published in 1847, and embodying his ideas and plans, will satisfy the most sceptical, that Dr. Ryerson imagined European elementary schools, like those of Massachusetts, to be designed for the education of all; and similarly, that non-sectarianism was the rule and sectarianism the exception. The prejudice on this latter head, from which so much strife continues to emanate, must have been strong when the presence of the very facts for its removal could not be perceived. On this latter head I quote from the report for 1847. After referring to the admission of the Bible and Bible history in the elementary schools of Switzerland, Prussia, and France, Dr. Ryerson says:—

"Similar testimonials in respect both to the same and other countries might be indefinitely multiplied; but those already adduced are sufficient to show, that religious and moral instruction should be made an essential part of public education, and that such instruction can be, and has been, communicated extensively and thoroughly, for all purposes of Christian morality, without any bias of sectarianism, and without any interference whatever with the peculiarities of different churches or sects. Such are the sentiments of enlightened writers, Roman Catholic and Protestant, as well Republican as Monarchical; and such are the views and practice of both Protestant and Roman Catholic nations. Here is neither laxity nor compromise of religious principle; here is the establishment and administration of a system on the part of Government which is founded upon the fundamental principles of Christian truth and morality, and which interferes not with the dogmas and predilection of diversified sectarianism; and here is a co-operation of members of different religious persuasions in matters which they hold and value in common—in which they have a common interest—and in which co-operation is in most instances even essential to existence,—the same as Legislators or Merchants, Agriculturists or Soldiers co-operate in measures and enterprises of common agreement and necessity."

Any one reading this passage would necessarily suppose that in Prussia and France the system said to be established there, is nonsectarian; that Protestants and Catholics co-operate in the work of education, at the same time discarding the peculiar doctrines which distinguish each; in the same manner as legislators co-operate on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, or Merchants at the Board of Trade. The facts are, however, the very reverse. To show the absurdity of all this tissue of assumptions, I here cite the high authority of Mr. Kay. The following passage has direct reference to Prussia, but is in no respect dissimilar to what he has described as characteristic of Germany and France. Treating of the Government of the Prussian Normal Schools Mr. Kay says:—

"In each Province, there are, as I have before stated, five or six of these institutions. In each county, there are generally two. If the inhabitants of a county are composed of Romanists and Protestants in pretty equal proportions, one of these colleges is devoted to the education of the Romanist teachers, the other to that of the Protestant. If nearly all the inhabitants of a county are of one faith, both of the Normal Colleges are devoted to the education of the teachers of this faith; and the teachers of the minority are educated in one of the colleges of a neighboring county. There are only two Normal Colleges in Prussia, where Romanist and Protestant teachers are professedly educated together. The directors of these great institutions are chosen from among the clergy. The director of a Romanist College is chosen by the Romanist Bishop of the Province, in which the college is situated; and the director of a Protestant College is chosen by the ecclesiastical authorities of the Province, in which the college is situated; subject, however, in both cases, to the approbation of the Minister of Education in Berlin, who has the power of objecting, if an unsuitable or injudicious choice is made. The Normal Colleges are, thus, put under the supervision of the religious bodies. The Government itself directs their management. It recognises the importance of these colleges having a decidedly religious character; and at the same time, of the education given in them being of the most liberal kind. On the one hand, therefore, it intrusts the direction of them to the Clergy, and on the other hand it reserves the right of examining them, so as to have the power of interfering, in case the *secular* education of the students should be injudiciously curtailed. The director of each College appoints all the professors and teachers. The religious ministers have therefore a considerable share of the direction of these institutions. Their character is decidedly religious, and a union between the clergy and the teachers is effected, which is productive of the best possible results."

This explicit and comprehensive description of the government of the Prussian Normal Schools, shows clearly that they are rigidly sectarian; and that, by the law of Prussia, the Protestants and Roman Catholics do not co-operate, and do not even meet in the same school

room; unless the school district is too poor to support two schools, when an exception is provided to the rule; but even here there is no renunciation of sectarian distinctions for the doctrinal religion of the school is that of the sect being in the majority; the exception to the rule extending only to a permission that the children of the minority shall not be compelled to remain in the school room during the time the religious doctrines of the majority are inculcated. The error committed by Dr. Ryerson of taking the exception for the rule; and believing or assuming that, in the principle of religious government, the school law of Europe is similar to that of Massachusetts is scarcely pardonable, when we consider the immense fund of information which was available, and moreover when we take into account his visit to Europe for the express purpose of procuring that necessary information.

3. *The religious instruction of the Schools.*—This third feature equally marks the difference of the one system from the other. In Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, Austria, Baden, Hanover, and also in Belgium, Switzerland and France, the Catechism is taught in all the elementary schools The pupils, at the Normal Schools, receive special religious instruction together, not separately, so that they may be qualified to teach these doctrines to the children in the elementary schools. This is the rule. How different in Massachusetts and Western Canada; where the Catechism and doctrinal teaching are proscribed; and where the teacher requires to be a person capable of divesting himself of every peculiarity which distinguishes one body of professing Christians from another.

4. *Period of training.*—In Prussia, Hanover, Hesse Cassel, Belgium and Switzerland, the period of Normal School training is three years. In Wirtemberg and France it is two years. In Saxony and Holland four years. And in Nassau five years. Besides the specified time which each student, on his admission, engages to continue in training, he is obliged under certain circumstances to remain longer, or after leaving the training school to return again, in order to perfect himself in those branches in which he may have proved himself to be deficient. In Massachusetts and Western Canada the term has been six or twelve months. I am not certain if the term in Massachusetts has been recently extended. Some proposals were made with that view; but at the time the Canadian school law was framed, six or twelve months was the term in the Normal Schools of that State.

5. *Securities for continuing in the profession.*—To those who know the difficulty of changing from one trade or profession to another, in old countries, it may seem almost superfluous that guarantees should be provided to prevent teachers from abandoning the profession. It is a precaution, however, which has been adopted with more or less stringency by the several governments. The Prussian law enacts, that

"Every pupil who receives such assistance from a Normal School is obliged at the end of his educational course to accept the place which the provincial consistories assign him; a prospect of advancement, however, must always be held out to him in case of perseverance and good conduct."

The following is a copy of the written engagement which every student has to sign before he can be admitted to the training school at Potsdam:

"I, the undersigned N—— of N——, by these presents, bind myself conformably with the ordinance of the royal minister of public instruction and ecclesiastical and medical affairs, dated February 28th, 1825, with the consent of my father (or guardian), who signs this with me, * * * * * to place myself during three years after my leaving the Normal School, at the disposal of the King's government; and consequently not to subscribe any thing contrary to this engagement; or, in such case, to refund to the Normal School the expenses incurred by the State for my instruction."

In France, the students are bound to serve, as teachers, ten years, after leaving the Normal Schools; or to reimburse the government for the expense of their maintainance, if they quit the profession before that time. These are examples of the nature of the precautions which are generally adopted. Besides these, Prussia has discontinued the training of female teachers for the Protestant schools; for the reason that they made good wives, were much sought after, and soon got married. The Catholic female teachers, on account of an understanding among themselves with respect to the nature of their mission, do not marry; and consequently are in general training and are generally employed in the Catholic schools. Thus while the several governments make every necessary provision for the training of an efficient staff of teachers, they do not neglect the precaution of securing to the state the future services of those who have been so trained.

Now look at the contrast presented to this in America. Massachusetts requires a simple declaration from the student, on his admission, that his intention is to follow the business of a teacher. The requirement in Western Canada is the same. Observe, it is not a declaration that the student shall follow the teacher's calling, but an intention, existing only at the time of making the declaration to do so. There is no sense of an after obligation. In short, there is nothing obligatory in the declaration; for a student may subsequently alter his intention, and still be honorably exonerated from any liability. And this is exactly what is of daily occurrence, both in the Normal Schools of the adjoining States and here. Desertion appears to be the rule. Continuance, as a teacher, is the exception. I believe that a statistical report of the period during which the male teachers, at present employed and said to have been trained in the Normal School, have officiated, would show that they were all teachers in the Province before the Normal School was instituted. If so, that they owe nothing to the Normal School; having attended one of its sessions for the purpose of saving themselves from proscription. And, if so, that the new male teachers, trained since the establishment of the Normal School, have all deserted.

There are many considerations that conspire to produce the conviction that the Normal School in Toronto, under the present School system, will continue to be a deceptive and fraudulent representation of the original European type. In the first place, its non-religious character has estranged the clergy of the leading denominations and of the majority of the population. Now as no Government School System can prosper that is not acceptable to the clergy of the leading denominations, there is no hope that this system will, so long as its non-religious character continues in force. The connection between the schools and the clergy forms a topic of much interest, in the writings of such educational guides as M. Guizot, Cousin and Mr. Joseph Kay. It has been treated so elaborately and profoundly, and its practical illustrations are so ample, that I should consider it a waste of words to attempt to add any thing to what has been said by these distinguished authorities. In the second place no teacher of a Common School, unless incapacitated for any other employment, will brook, for any length of time, the treatment administered by the trustees of school sections. A teacher of ordinary attainments requires protection. To whom is he to look for this, when his natural protector the clergyman is ignored? Under such circumstances it is by no means likely that competent teachers will remain for any length of time in the profession; more particularly, as, in a new country, such as this, so many avenues are open to young men of talent to improve their fortunes. In the third place, the necessary and proper security of the parents or guardians that the intended teachers should follow the vocation, no doubt would operate directly, if enforced, to prevent students from applying for admission to the Normal School. This result must have been foreseen, and probably is the reason why no security is demanded.

I have now, I think, pointed out clearly, that our Normal School has not one feature which resembles any feature of the German Normal Schools, and that consequently Dr. Ryerson must have labored under a serious misapprehension when he stated that its features were derived from the German system. I have shown, from the above comparison, that in their object, their government, their religious instruction, their period of training, and their securities demanded from teachers, they are altogether dissimilar.

With this fact made plain, we can be at no loss to assign the reason why German Normal Schools fulfil their mission, why they are models of excellence, and why they have been introduced to every country in Europe, and are the theme of eulogy by every writer on education in America; and also why the institution in Toronto mis-named Normal, presents the sorrowful statistical picture to be seen by a proper classification of the separate facts of the official annual general returns.* If

* As the proof of this would occupy too much space, unnecessarily, reference is recommended to the official reports of the Local Superintendent in Canada and the New England States; and more particularly to a pamphlet published, in Toronto, in 1855, entitled "The Common School System—its Principle, Operation and Results."

by the unanimous testimony of Europe and America the German system is perfect, successful and satisfactory, and the Massachusetts system is acknowledged by the Massachusetts educational authorities themselves to be defective and to be the reverse in practice of what, in theory, it ought to be, why is it that in Canada, we have rejected practically every feature of the former and embodied every feature of the latter in our system? Why is it that in organizing a Provincial Normal School, the wisdom and experience of the old world was rejected *in toto*, and preference was given to the untried theories and crude and undigested creations of the Boston school of educationists? Do not these questions demand a reply? To the state of the Normal School I am desirous to draw particular attention, and for this reason I have devoted more space to this the most important part of the whole machinery. The practical developments, as I have exhibited them, from the official reports, ought to be suggestive of a measure of immediate and thorough reform, at the instance of Government. What measure will that be? Can it be reformed without changing the whole system of Common School education? Can a Normal School be successfully established on a school system that has a false basis? These are grave questions. They are strikingly suggestive and significant. They admit of but one answer.

I have the honor to be, Sir, &c.,

A PROTESTANT.

Toronto, 2nd February, 1857.

No. VII.

SIR,—Having disposed of the discrepancy between the statements of the general and local reports, and the circumstances affecting the condition of the Normal School, I now pass on to make some remarks and suggestions on the school system as a whole. And, in the first place, I ask the authority for the dictum of Dr. Ryerson that secular education is the business of the state and religious education is not. I wish to know the ground on which the argument rests that every child is entitled to a knowledge of reading and writing, but not to a knowledge of the doctrines of religion ; the basis for the interference of the state in providing only one species of mental food, and for the denial of its right to provide also for the wants of the body. I have searched every annual report and can find no principle advanced to sustain the assumption. The only attempt at justification is the practice of Massachusetts, which Dr. Ryerson has been at great pains to hold up to the people of Canada as a model for imitation. I cannot afford space to quote, from his many repetitions of the transcendant virtues of this republican community ; but by reference to the essay on free schools, in the annual report for 1852, the measure of his sympathy for such authorities as Daniel Webster, Edward Everett and Horace Mann, may not only be ascertained, but also how completely we have been governed in school matters by these Boston authorities. At one time, we are told, that the system must be secular because all cannot be taught the doctrines of religion together. At another, that it must be secular because the state has nothing to do with teaching religion ; that being the province of the parents and clergy. And all this, be it observed, is the law of Canada, because Daniel Webster and Edward Everett and Horace Mann have decreed that so it should be. If we turn to Webster and his confreres and demand from them their abstract principle for this school dogma, the answer is, that in accordance with the true republican idea that all children born into the world are the children of the state, their rights are common ; and, therefore, being distinct from the peculiarities of parents, the duty of the state is to educate them in a uniform state system. This is the concentrated essence of all they have said in justification of the school system being uniform, and of the consequent necessity of discarding religion and

making the schools purely secular. Without questioning the sincerity of Dr. Ryerson's religious and political professions, it is a fit subject of enquiry, how far he has been cognizant of the extent to which he has become the disciple, the creature and the instrument of such men as Daniel Webster and Horace Mann. If Dr. Ryerson can show the reason for the faith that is in him, why is it that he has not done so apart from his Boston platform? Why is it that he refers us to Boston for the validity of a Canadian school system founded on a republican and non-religious basis, and is unable to justify it on any other than republican and non-religious reasons?

We are officially instructed that the state is non-sectarian, the Government is non-sectarian; and from these premises it is argued the individual members of the state should also be non-sectarian; and that the best way to accomplish this object is to begin the work early in the school room, so that by training children betimes in a renunciation of all the peculiar aspects of Christianity, they may afterwards, when grown up, become indifferent to all, be released from ecclesiastical restraint and the thraldom of external religious observances. In the struggle going on to unsectarianize the population, many are engaged who, it is to be hoped, are acting more in ignorance, than from choice. The war cry is secularization!—Down with the sects!—Down with those who have individual scruples!—The state has one conscience; individual members of the commonwealth have no right to exercise any other! But while this is going on, on the one hand, a formidable body of objectors are found standing up in defence of their natural and civil rights, on the other. First, those who are opposed to state schools. Second, those who consider the present system founded on infidel principles. Third, those who hold it to be republican. Fourth, those who believe that it violates the Christian sentiment of toleration. Fifth, those who will not contaminate the morals of their children by sending them to a promiscuous school. Sixth, those who desire to bring up their children in their own religious faith and practice. Seventh, those who look on the schools as pauper schools. Eighth, those who consider the system of teaching and teachers as superficial. Ninth, those who desire to make religion the controlling and governing principle of secular conduct, in place of separating it. Tenth, those who think they have no obligation to pay for the education of the children of people who are able, but sufficiently unprincipled to shirk this performance of parental duty. Eleventh, those who prefer discipline to pertness, and respect the teaching of antiquity more than that of modern times. Twelfth, those who, influenced by the experience of other countries, and the family resemblance of the beginning, progress and termination of all religious wars, believe that the system is impracticable. These constitute some of the classes of objectors. People do not all entertain the same objection. What may be advanced by one, may

be unperceived by others. But, so it is, that the mind of the community is sufficiently divided to indicate the existence of irreconcilable antagonistic elements verging, at one and the same time, from so many different points. Ask the members of the clergy, of the magistracy, of the mercantile and trading class, aye, of the respectable portion of the advocates of state free schools, why they all educate their children at other seminaries and do not patronise the Common Schools. The answers may be different, in so far as they are the answers of different classes of objectors; but taken as a whole they are objections to the school system; and, in this respect, the advocates of state free schools who have a position in society, may be made at any time to give practical testimony against the validity of their professions.

While this contest is going on, the system itself threatens to explode. To avert such a calamity the state school doctors have lately recommended the immediate construction of two safety valves. The one, compulsory attendance by means of the officers of justice, I have already examined. The other, is Sunday Schools. Now, the institution of Sunday Schools is to be viewed from two different points; the one, its function as an accessory to a religious system of education; and the other, its function as an independent institution, required by the wants of the state, but which the state is not to provide. Of these two kinds of Sunday Schools, the one can easily be identified as that of Europe, and the other, as readily of Boston. The former are uniformly surrounded by a parental and tutorial guardianship, which is simply an extension of that exercised on the six working days of the week. It is stern and exacting, but not more so than is required to curb the tendency of youth towards a lax state of morals. On the other hand, we are not without examples in Canada of the nature of the Boston system of Sunday Schools. They are the initiatory step to the soiree, thence to imprudent early marriages;—thence to a squalid sickly progeny, and the fulfilment of the law that the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. But our School doctors have decided that Sunday Schools are a public necessity. They have now gone to work to introduce the Boston system on a grand scale. A Convention is to take place at Kingston; the Boston luminaries are to be there to instruct us benighted Canadians, how it is that Sunday School training can impart religion to secularized boys and girls. Thus we see that in connection with the movement for compulsory attendance, our Common School authorities are by no means idle. Their last hope is compulsory attendance and Sunday Schools. If these fail, then all is over. The present school system will thereafter be remembered in Canadian history as the Quixotic production of a few mistaken and narrow-minded bigots. But let us examine this Sunday School system a little more narrowly. It is admitted to be a public necessity, just in the same way that secular education is so

assumed; yet, in the one case, the state is said to have a duty to perform; while, in the other, it is said to be divested of all obligation. Why so? How does it come that secular and Sunday Schools are admitted to be public necessities, yet the interference of the state becomes justifiable in the one case only? We may search in vain for a solution of this paradox. Among the dicta of *universal education, the education of all,* and *the duties of the State,* not one instance can be elicited to justify the claim of the secular schools on the State, and the denial of this claim for Sunday Schools. But in all cases we are referred to free school countries and to the practice of Boston. Well then let us turn to Boston; let us see of what sort of stuff this exemplary community is composed; let us measure their religion and morality by their own standard. A great deal has been said about the intelligence and morals of the people of Boston. Since the commencement of our present school system there has been no end to the fulsome eulogies by Dr. Ryerson and Lord Elgin. Indeed no longer back than the 30th November last, Lord Elgin repeated, before an Edinburgh audience, the often told fallacy that the free schools of Boston which had existed there over two hundred years, had been the means of "raising, to a level unprecedentedly high, the standard for general morality and intelligence." Making every allowance for the strong personal motives which Dr. Ryerson and Lord Elgin are both known to have had, for hawking this assertion about, and continuing to produce it on every favorable occasion, it cannot be presumed that the public can derive benefit from a belief which, notwithstanding that it has been officially impressed, is itself a most gross and deliberate falsehood. I shall, however, take Dr. Ryerson and Lord Elgin on their own joint assumption, that the free school system of Boston has existed in operation in that city for two hundred years, and that it has produced the wonderful results that they have described. It is well known that, in Boston as well as in Canada, the chief actors interested immediately in the working of the Common Schools, always conceal and never at any time divulge one of their defects. Just as Daniel Webster and Horace Mann have pictured as a reality, what they fancied their Common School system should be, so does Dr. Ryerson report annually that the system is established, that it is perfect, that the Normal School is efficient, that it is fast supplying the schools with teachers, and that he is sustained by the people at large with unparelleled liberality and unanimity. People at a distance and who have no means of knowing the precise facts believe these reports; they thereby get currency; and finally a boldness is assumed with respect to their authority that confers on them a semblance of truth. So it is with school reports which emanate from Boston and Western Canada, and likewise with every thing which comes from the parties directly interested in upholding the system at all hazards. Under such circumstances it is fortunate to meet

with one credible witness, who has the honesty and the boldness to speak the truth, to lift the curtain that hides the den of free school iniquity, and to proclaim to his countrymen and to the people of Boston that they have forsaken the true God and are treading in the footsteps of the devil. No one will question Theodore Parker's devotion to the cause of State Schools, or his attachment to the institutions of his native city. A type of the true Boston educationist, he is the last person to impugn the results of secular education unless constrained to do so from the promptings of duty. Theodore Parker, however, has spoken out, he has presented to the people of Boston their likeness, embracing their manifold vices, and their loss of every sentiment of religion. Bearing in mind that the intelligence and morality of Boston has been officially held up to the people of Canada as a model for imitation, and that in Sunday school organization it is said to be a paragon of excellence, let us read the emphatic words of Mr. Parker. The following is from his sermon published in 1851, entitled "The Chief Sins of the People."

"Are the laws of Massachusetts kept in Boston, then? The usury law says, thou shalt not take more than six per cent on thy money. Is that kept? There are thirty-four millions of banking capital in Massachusetts, and I think that every dollar of this Capital has broken the law within the past twelve months! and yet no complaint has been made. There are three or four hundred brothels in this city of Boston, and ten or twelve hundred shops for the sale of rum. All of them are illegal! some are as well known to the police as is this house! indeed, a great deal more frequented by some of them than any house of God. Does any body disturb them? No. * * * When the old South Church was built, when Christ's Church in Salem street, when King's Chapel, when Brattle Square Church, they were respectively the costliest buildings in town. They were symbols of religion, as churchss always are;—symbols of the popular esteem for religion. Out of the property of the people great sums of money were given for these houses of God. They said, like David of old, it is a shame that we dwell in a palace of cedars, and the Ark of the Most High remains under the curtains of a tent. How is it now? A crockery shop over-looks the roof trees of the Church where once the eloquence of a Channing enchanted to heaven the worldly hearts of worldly men, alas! to let them fall again under his successor. Now an hotel looks down on the Church which was once all radiant with the sweet piety of a Buckminster. A haberdasher's warehouse overtops the Church of the Blessed Trinity! the roof of the shop is almost as tall as the very tower of the Church. These things are only symbols. Let us compare Boston, in this respect, with any European city you can name! let us compare it with gay and frivolous Vienna, the gayest and most frivolous city of all Europe, not setting Paris aside. For, though the surface of life in Paris sparkles and glitters all over with radiant and irridescent and dazzling bubbles, empty and ephemeral, yet underneath there flows a stream which comes from the great fountain of nature, and tends on to the ocean of human welfare. No city is more full of deep thought and earnest life. But in Vienna it is not so. Yet even there, above the magnificence of the Herrengasse, above the proud mansions of the Esterhazys and the Schwartzenbergs and the Lichtensteins, above the costly elegance of the imperial palace, St. Stephen's Church lifts its tall spire, and points to God all day long and all the night, a still and silent emblem of a power higher than any mandate of the kings of earth; aye, to the Infinite God Men look up to its Cross, overtowering the frivolous city, and take a lesson! *Here*, Trade looks down to find the Church. I am glad that the Churches are lower than the shops. I have said it many times, and I say it now. I am glad they are not less magnificent than our BANKS and HOTELS. I am glad that haberdasher's shops look down on them. Let the outward show correspond to the inward fact. If I am pinched and withered by disease, I will not disguise it from you by wrappages of cloth; but I will let you see that I am shrunken and shrivelled to the bone. If the pulpit is no nearer heaven than the tavern let that fact appear. If the desk in the counting-room is to give law to the desk in the Church, do not commit the hypocrisy of putting the pulpit desk above the counting-room. Let us see where we are."

This is Boston, the city of secular state schools and Sunday voluntary schools. The above is a candid acknowledgment of the fruits of secular education ; by which, it is seen, the counting house and the tavern are held in higher estimation than the Church, and no vestige of an inward sentiment of religion remains to distinguish the descendants of the famous puritans. Indifferentism, the non-sectarian standard, has here reached its climax. They have parchment laws on morality, which are practically obsolete. Christianity is a mere name, an outward semblance, not a reality. Their true God is Mammon ; their appropriate object of secular worship. How characteristic is all this of the separation of religion from the business of the world. That society should follow its worldly occupations during six days of the week, and bottle up its religion for Sunday, and that children should be taught early to follow this course, is a novelty, never suggested in any other age or country. It has been reserved for the Boston and Canadian educational doctors to prescribe and carry into force the most ready means by which to sap the foundations of morality and religion. Sunday Schools of this sort and under such management are the sure precursors of youthful habits that lead to imprudence ; and on this ground alone, if on no other, the conduct of those who are foremost in getting up the present movement for Sunday Schools on a large scale, as a public necessity, is in my opinion exceedingly reprehensible. But this is not the only objectionable ground. The chief objection consists in the extreme separation which is contemplated, of the secular from the Sunday Schools. It is only about a year since Her Majesty Queen Victoria signified in a special manner, her approbation of the Rev. John Caird's protest against the separation of religion from the business of every day life. In Canada, however, the doctrine is officially proclaimed, that in order to train up children in the way which they ought to walk in after life, when they enter on the business of the world, they must be instructed early, to separate the business of the seventh day from that of the other six days of the week ; so that what is religious and what is secular may be far enough estranged to prevent them from exercising a reflex influence on each other. It is presumed, of course, that this early inculcation is to form the habits which are to be retained and acted upon in after life. This is the latest importation. We are following rapidly the example of Boston ; and if it had so happened that we possessed no power in our midst to destroy, in due season, this hydra-headed monster of republicanism and infidelity, a Canadian Parker might at some future day be able to make a similar comparison of our devotion to secular affairs and indifference for the symbols as well as the essence of religion.

In addressing you, Sir, in this public form, I have done so for the purpose of drawing the attention of the Government, of which you are the most prominent member, to a state of things existing in one depart-

ment of its administration which is a foul blot and signal disgrace, to a country, professing to be Christian, and boasting of its inherited gifts of civil and religious toleration. My object is not to precipitate the Government into a popular collision, regardless of the certain consequences which would attend such a course. By no means. All I aim at is to get those into whose hands the destinies of the Province are intrusted, to begin to look seriously at what is going on, under their direct sanction. I am not insensible, in common with many others who entertain the same opinion, that the evil referred to will cure itself, if only allowed time to work out its own destruction. That it contains within itself its own antidote is admitted. But that is not sufficient. In the meantime the mind of the community is demoralized by the propagation both politically and religiously of the worst elements of Fourierism; and this is effected through the channel of official Journals and Reports, which find their way gratuitously into every hole and corner of the Province; into every township and every school section. I am not now going to presume to dictate to the Government what course it should adopt. I feel confident that a little reflection will be sufficient to point out the cause of the evil and also the remedy; and that the first error and the whole course of error will be perceived to have proceeded from not having taken experience for the guide. Had Sir Charles Metcalfe appointed a Minister of Education, with a seat in the Cabinet and directly responsible to the people's representatives, would the Province have been distracted in the way it has been during the last ten years, by a school functionary battling to force his peculiar school dogmas on the people, against their most solemn protests, and their most determined resistance? Certainly not. Such a scene of strife could never have been witnessed. A Cabinet Minister would have had to consult their wishes, in the same way that every other Cabinet Minister has to do. Here is an anomaly existing in our system of responsible government, to which is to be imputed the whole of our Common School misfortunes. Had Sir Charles Metcalfe made reference to any country, where experiments on education had been thoroughly elaborated and satisfactorily determined, he would have found that the Minister of education is simply an administrative functionary, not a perpetual legislator. In making this remark I have no wish to imply censure of Lord Metcalfe's Government. Far from it. Circumstances existed at that time which probably precluded the adoption of what otherwise might have taken place. But it is not too late to do now what should have been done then. It is not too late for the Government to think of allowing the people to compromise their school differences, through the instrumentality of a responsible Minister of the Cabinet, whose duty would be confined to the service of their general and sectional wants, according to the diversity of circumstances; and who would be their responsible servant,—not their irresponsible master.

In bringing these letters to a close, I need to make no apology for having performed the task of canvassing the practical and theoretical elements of the Common School system. The subject is one of vast importance to the future of Canada ; and if they can be instrumental, to however small an extent, in exciting inquiry, I shall be satisfied.

I have the honor to be, Sir, &c., &c.

A PROTESTANT.

Toronto, 10th February, 1857.

SUGGESTIONS

ON THE ORGANIZATION

OF

A SYSTEM OF COMMON SCHOOLS,

ADAPTED

TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND STATE OF SOCIETY
IN CANADA,

BEING A SERIES OF THREE LETTERS,

ADDRESSED TO

THE HONORABLE JOHN A. MACDONALD,

BY

A PROTESTANT.

TO THE HON. JOHN A. MACDONALD.

No. I.

SIR,—For the same reason as that stated in my former series of letters, I again have the honor of addressing you on the subject of Common School education. In that series I undertook to show that the system in Western Canada is constructed on a false basis, and is therefore deficient and, to a majority of the people, unsatisfactory and repulsive. I now propose to submit what I consider ought to form the governing principles of a Provincial system, the conditions to be observed in its organization, and the means to be employed for its permanent stability.

The duty of government to promote and control public education rests on two assignable grounds ; first, the necessity of accompanying the progress of national civilization by moral and humanizing agencies ; and second, the inadequacy of voluntary efforts to perform this office. Experience has demonstrated that the higher seminaries of learning no less than the lower, when left to depend on their own unaided means of support, have uniformly diminished in number, and thereby become limited in the range of their usefulness. In the lower walks of life this is conspicuously manifested by the number of persons recorded, in the census reports, as unable to read and the much greater number unable to write. But while it is the duty of government to provide facilities for humanizing the progress of national civilization both in the higher and lower education of the people, the obligation is rendered the more imperative in reference to the inferior class of schools, by reason that the circumstances of parents, dependent for their subsistence on arduous bodily labor and the bringing up of large families on uncertain and precarious means, often necessarily constrain them to neglect parental duties of whose obligation they are in most cases too painfully conscious.

Public education being, thus, a State necessity, an important duty is imposed on government to provide, not only means, but to exert its best energies to see that the means are the right kind, that they are calculated to accomplish the object for which public schools are instituted, and that they are capable of a general application to all sections of the country and of a general acceptance by all sections of

the people. The chief requisite in a public and national system is that it corresponds and is in harmony with the form of government, the political institutions and religious feelings of the community for whom it is constituted. It is evident, if, in modeling a system, these active and controlling elements of society are disregarded or not allowed their full scope, that perpetual jarring and discordance of the parts will be experienced in all attempts to reduce it to practice. At the close of the French revolutionary war, in 1815, when Belgium became united with Holland, forming the kingdom of the Netherlands, steps were immediately adopted by the government of Holland to impose the Calvanistic Dutch School System on the Catholic population of Belgium. The contest which ensued and the manly resistance offered by the Catholics, during the twenty-nine years of this persistent, long and fruitless attempt of one of the worst examples of Protestant intolerance, only ended with the expulsion of the Nassau dynasty from Belgium in 1830; when under the new constitutional monarchy then formed, freedom of instruction of creeds and of all religious communions was established with constitutional guarantees; and since which date Belgium has taken its place among the best educational nations in Europe. No greater error can be committed, by a government, than to suppose that it can do violence to the settled convictions of a large section of the people without entailing prejudicial results that reflect, to at least an equal extent, in some other way, on the public interests; and no stronger proof of legislative incapacity can be evinced than the grafting of a dominant and irresponsible department of the public service on a free constitution, every other department of which is constructed on the principle of responsibility to the popular electoral voice.

The present aspect of educational affairs, in this Province, betokens an approaching crisis, which seems destined to completely revolutionize the whole fabric of public education. Not alone the Common School department, but also the Collegiate; for the same dominant influence which has afflicted the one has been engaged as steadily to undermine the other. The sentiment at present gaining ground in the Canadian mind is, that Common Schools, Grammar Schools and Colleges, should be released from unnecessary restraint, and should be subject to Government interference no further than is necessary to ascertain the observance of the conditions on which public aid is granted. The affiliation of religious denominational Colleges with a spurious and non-religious University, is apparently as repulsive and as great a piece of Gothamite patchwork, as either the junction of Grammar and Common Schools, under the conjoined management of Grammar and Common School Boards of Trustees, or an infidel and republican Common School System which religious people in this British Province are compelled by law to uphold. With the process of school tinkering which has

been going on for several years and which has been visited on all sides by ridicule and contempt, the public mind seems to be at last surfeited, and we now appear to be on the eve of some great change for which public opinion is fully prepared. In view of this critical stage of our educational history, it may not be out of place to take a glance at the materials with which the Government will have to deal, at the object which it ought to keep steadily in view, and the machinery best fitted as well for the work to be accomplished as to insure general satisfaction.

As the object of public elementary schools, with which I am at present more immediately concerned, is the promotion of moral and industrial habits among the great mass of the laboring population, care will be required to adjust the means to be employed so that they shall exactly serve that specific object ; and equal care will be necessary to guard against misapplication of these same means, through misapprehension of what is or is not conducive to the desired end. Above all things the Common School must be regarded as an instrument through which the State aims at the prevention of ignorance and poverty, and their reflex consequences on the interests and well being of the State itself. The contrary mistaken notion to which I have formerly adverted, prevalent in America, that the duty of the State is to educate all for the purpose of making enlightened citizens, and that every child born into the world is entitled to an education and has a claim for a free education at the expense of the State, has been prolific, as we have seen, of the worst effects here as well as in the United States. The erroneous notions produced, by a false system, on the rising generation, have operated to corrupt the minds of young men, the sons of farmers and others, and to seduce them from following the professions of their parents, to seek, what they esteem genteel employment in towns and cities. Since the present system has been in existence the scarcity of agricultural laborers has gradually become more and more a subject of complaint, while the influx of young men to Commercial, Railroad and Bar-room pursuits is a sad commentary on the *universal system of education* which Lord Elgin told the people of Glasgow was "elevating our intellectual standard to an elevation never before attained by any community." I was told last week by a person, who, seeing an advertisement of employment for about a month, to make up accounts, applied for the situation, that in the space of about three hours from the appearance of the newspaper notice, upwards of seventy applications had been made. Some time before, I had a letter from a young man in the country soliciting my intercession to procure him a situation on one of the Railways, and was about to apply to one of the Directors of the Grand Trunk Railroad Company, for that purpose, when an editorial of the *Leader* newspaper made the announcement that

over four hundred applications of a similar nature were then in the hands of the Directors. Is such a circumstance to be looked upon with unconcern? Is it not an indication of a dreadful social distemper whose visible effects remain yet to be developed? Yet this is the unavoidable result of our present Normal School management. The young men who have attended six months at that institution and leave it with certificates of qualification to teach go forth into the country with the most mistaken estimate of their own importance. They open schools wherever accident places them, and by teaching and familiar intercourse combined with the example of nomadic habits, for they seldom remain longer than twelve months in one place, they soon contaminate the minds of the older pupils, and also of young men who may reside in the neighborhood, by their doctrines of enlightened citizenship; and, thus, these pupils soon begin to learn to disdain honest labor. Herein we see that the very evil against the existence of which the Governments of Europe strive most energetically to provide, and have studiously framed their Normal School Regulations so as most effectually to prevent, is, with us, encouraged and fostered by direct Legislative sanction. The instruments through which our Canadian Normal School operates to perpetrate this wide spread evil are not alone the young teachers who carry certificates, but all those besides who have had their industrial habits corrupted by the discipline of that institution while within its walls; and also the three thousand and more promiscuous teachers scattered over the Province, who imbibe the doctrines of enlightened citizenship through the insidious poison contained in the Journal of Education and the Annual Report. Here, on the contrary, as in Europe, the great aim of Government in establishing elementary public schools should be the preservation of the natural and normal relations of society. But what can be more directly subversive of this aim or what more detrimental to national prosperity, than the institution of artificial arrangements whose tendency is to damage the agricultural interest, by diverting labor from it and curtailing the amount of that labor. Setting aside the argument on national grounds, if we compare the morals and the amount of human happiness which are the lot, on the one hand, of those who are contented to fill the sphere for which nature had intended them, and on the other, of those who had been seduced by bad social arrangements, to seek a living in cities; the contrast, if examined minutely, will show virtue, domestic happiness, health and independence, opposed to conventional vice, Barroom and Saloon associations, loathsome diseases, debt and dishonesty with the prospect looming in the distance of a wrecked constitution and a beggarly exit from the stage of life. Take the list of insolvent debtors, engendered by Mr. Freeman's Insolvent Debtor's Act, as

furnished in the *Gazette*. Are they farmers? No. Are they traders? Yes. And yet a cursory observer only sees a small part, or perceives only one aspect of the insolvent picture. The ramified effects of those insolvencies are infinite. The amount of legal business, the unjust confessions of judgment, the false assignments, the attempts at fraud, the false swearing, the injury suffered by connections and dependents, and the loss to thousands indirectly affected by them, are things of which, in gross or in detail, we generally entertain a very inadequate conception. They are, however, the consequences, and it will be found so on the examination of individual cases, of a departure from the path of honest industry to commercial adventures for which those employed in them were not adapted. Therefore, both on national and individual grounds, as well for the welfare of the individual members of society as for the protection of society itself, the duty of the Legislature of Canada in framing a new school law will be to make it subservient exclusively to this moral and industrial object.

Having defined the object to be kept steadily in view, while preparing a new law for the organization and management of public elementary schools, I now pass on to the consideration of the means by which that object is to be attained. And the first consideration is, the nature and composition of the governing bodies. In this, as in the former case, we must submit to be guided by experience. In Europe, under all the different forms of political government, we find that, uniformly and without exception, the government of the elementary common schools is placed, both theoretically and practically, in the hands of the general governments, the municipalities and the clergy. These are the three governing bodies. The general government makes the law, and administers it in so far as it has a general bearing on the appropriation of the general school fund, and the character and quantity of religious and secular instruction prescribed by law. The municipalities have complete control over all the schools within their respective jurisdictions, in local assessments, the erection and management of school houses, the selection of teachers and the appointment of local superintendents. The Clergy do not occupy the same distinctive sphere of a united authority, such as a general or municipal government, and therefore have not, like them, an independent action. They are, however, recognized by the law as the guardians and exponents of religion and public morality, and by virtue of this recognition they co-operate with the general and municipal governments to protect and supervise the religious character of the schools and of the teachers.

However desirable it may be to follow the successful experience of other countries in working out the details, still there are diversities of circumstances which require a suitable modification of the arrange-

ments existing in these countries. Among the greatest of these diversities is the independent tone of sentiment, which characterizes equally all classes of people in Canada, as well as the population of America. There is in this country no peasant class. And it is equally exempt from the opposite extreme of aristocratic wealth, influence and dominancy. Therefore from the difference in the nature of society, arrangements that would suit the remains of feudal manners and associations in the old world, would be badly adapted to the large amount of freedom which we enjoy. These and similar considerations mark the propriety of leaving education perfectly free and unfettered, and of limiting Government and municipal interference and control simply to the furnishing of facilities by which the people can organize schools to suit their various tastes. Now, notwithstanding that it is the duty of the government to provide and regulate elementary education, it would perform that duty very imperfectly if it did not make choice of the means most likely to answer the purpose. And that purpose cannot be said to be properly answered, unless the whole of the children of school age are reported on the school roll. Nothing is more easy than to declare the school in a section free, under a mistaken apprehension that it will tempt parents to send their children ; and yet to find that not one third of the children attend it. Or school districts may be so divided as to defeat the object for which the division is made, because it is not judiciously made and is not in accordance with the wishes of many parents who are affected by it. Our experience is conclusive, that the dissensions, as reported by the Local Superintendents, arising from so many different causes, may be all traced to that most absurd principle of the present Common School Law, which prescribes uniformity in the mode of organizing and managing the schools. The law is positive on points which should be left to the discretion of municipalities : The Trustees enforce it simply because it is law ; and a state of disruption ensues which continues from one year to another without intermission. All these consequences are produced by the Government taking upon itself to do, and authorizing the local school authorities also to do, what could be better done by the people themselves if left to their own free action. While, therefore, the control of the Government and of municipal corporations should be confined to what cannot be done by voluntary associations, in all other respects the greatest latitude and freest scope should characterize the provisions of a general school law.

There is one other point which requires to be noticed in these preliminary considerations, before proceeding to the practical details, or what may more properly be termed the mechanism of the system.—That is, the nature and extent of the religious element. As public morality rests as much on the influence of ecclesiastical authority as

on the teaching of the Scriptures, it becomes a concern of the first importance that the clergy of all denominations should participate in the work of education. Indeed without this participation it is not possible that any system can ever become popular. Now how is the co-operation of the clergy to be secured ? Only in one way and on one specific condition ; namely, that what is truly and properly religion shall be taught in such a manner as each clergyman or each denomination chooses to prescribe. Anything short of this, notwithstanding that it might chime in with the notions of a certain class of extemporized preachers, will never meet with the acquiescence of the great ecclesiastical corporations or the congregations over which they preside. In the arrangement of the religious element we will be quite safe to follow the example of the European elementary schools, and make the religious denominational character of each school conform to the denominational peculiarities of the parents whose children are to be educated therein. There are some things that adjust themselves in accordance with natural laws, without any extraordinary effort of the mind to discern the adaptation. Such is the arrangement that Government should appoint the District Inspectors, because they are responsible for the performance of their duties to Government only. Or for a similar reason, that the Local Superintendents should be appointed by the Municipal Corporations. And so it is with the religious instruction given in the school, that it should correspond with the religious belief of the parents whose children are educated there. If the differences of religious creed, in the same school section, are assumed as an objection,—then enlarge the section or make the school divisions dependent on the voluntary denominational combinations of the different religious bodies, so that each school shall have a specific religious character ; which is the best guarantee, indeed the only guarantee, that the clergy and congregations, connected with it, will become collectively and personally interested in its prosperity.

With Protestant, Catholic, Jewish or other distinctions, the Government can have no concern. Its duty, in pursuance of the object to be served, is to secure for the children of the humbler classes a religious and secular education, in the only way and by the only means that is possible to secure it, namely, by making it acceptable ; and notwithstanding that we are a Christian people and all our laws are based on Christianity, still if there are those among us who from conscientious belief profess any other than the Christian religion, they are entitled to the same educational privileges on the ground of state policy, if on no other ; for it ought to be the maxim of our Government, as it is of the older and therefore more experienced governments of the old world, that it is better to encourage Judaism than indifferentism, better for children to be brought up under some species of ecclesiastical control, even though not Christian, than that they

should be allowed to go forth into society, destitute of all moral restraint.

The mechanism of a Common School system, suitable to the circumstances of this country, I shall divide in two parts. One that which naturally comes within the jurisdiction of the municipal coporations. The other, that in charge of the General Government. In this order I shall dispose of the subject in two more letters.

I have the honor to be, Sir, &c., &c.

A PROTESTANT.

Toronto, 24th March, 1857.

No. II.

SIR,—I now proceed to the consideration of the administrative machinery by which the work of common school education is to be carried on. And first of that part which belongs to the Municipal Corporations. These Corporations should be constituted independent authorities, in all matters connected with the local management of schools, by virtue of the fiscal school jurisdiction which they exercise. As the members of a Municipal Council are elected by the suffrages of a municipality to protect and promote its general interests; its power ought therefore to be supreme within the municipality in every act of assessment and expenditure for local purposes. And so it was previous to the Common School Act of 1850. That Act created an *imperium in imperio.* It constituted a Municipal Board of School Trustees in each municipality independent of the Municipal Council, and invested it with a fiscal power, by which it has been enabled to control the Council in some of its most particular and necessary functions. That Act was predicated on the assumption that a Municipal Council was too cautious, about hazarding a large expenditure, where there was no certainty of the results; and the object was to overrule the disposition of the Council, by compelling the Council to do what it did not want to do, and what was considered at the time, and has been too truthfully verified since, was an extravagant and useless expenditure of public funds. But pray, why, was this anomaly grafted on our municipal system of local self-government? What right had the School Law thus to step in and violate the essential principle of the Municipal Law in force prior to the Act of 1849? The answer is supplied in Dr. Ryerson's Report for 1850, at page 18, where we are told, this arrangement is the same as that existing in the cities and towns of the United States, and that it has worked most efficiently in these cities and towns. Now, any one who knows anything of United States School Reports cannot help knowing that the measure of common school excellence, as of everything else, is determined by the number of dollars which it can realize. The Municipal Councils in the United States, if they had been left to their own independent action, would never have made the school fund sufficiently imposing, and, therefore, never could have secured for the schools the only feature calculated to make them harmonize with the pecuniary public sentiment. We all know that the chief feature of the United

States School Reports is the large amount of dollars paraded in their pages, and also, that the comparative conditions of the schools of different States is estimated by the comparative excess or diminution of the amounts of school monies which these States are capable of raising. In 1849 and 1850 the Canadian Municipal Councils refused to make the amount of the school assessment a criterion of educational progress. Many of them believed that the attempt to make this a criterion was a fraud practised on the country, as it has turned out to be. They, therefore, very properly and in accordance with their duty as guardians of the municipal corporate interests resisted it. But as it was the criterion in the States, from whence the rest of the Canadian School System had been imported, there was no alternative but to permit the Importer, on the faith of his profession and assurances, to have his own way in this particular as he had been allowed in every other. The measure of 1850 became law. Independent Boards of School Trustees were thereafter elected by household suffrage. These Trustees, invested with unlimited powers, have since obliged the Municipal Councils to assess for whatever amounts they have ordered. The school fund has consequently swelled to the desired dimensions. And similarly as in the United States, every successive annual report parades the astonishing increase of the aggregate school monies, as a criterion of the unprecedented progress of education.

But there is an important principle involved in the right of the General Government to create, in a municipality, a power greater than the Municipal Council. It is clearly a violation as I have said, of the true theory of self-government, which makes the council supreme in the assessment and expenditure of monies for local purposes.

Neither can it be justly assumed that a Board of School Trustees elected for a specific object can be equally impartial with a Council acting for the general good. If such assumption could be vindicated, it would follow that a special board for each department of the business of a municipality should be instituted; otherwise there is no satisfactory reason why a school board any more than a street board or a license board should be independent.

The greatest objection however to an Independent School Board is that its members are generally of an inferior standing both in education and respectability, and, with rare exceptions, could not obtain a seat in the Council. If a position in society and an acquaintance with general municipal business are to be considered recommendations in a public functionary, then is the Council more competent than a Board of School Trustees; for it is composed, not of theorists who are practically engaged in illustrating the falsity of their own principles, but of shrewd, intelligent business men, many of them holding the first rank in the community. On this head, and in order to shew how different and how much more correct is the idea of municipal self-government

in the old world, I extract the following from M. Victor Cousin's report to the French Government in 1831, when he was occupied along with M. Guizot, in digesting the system of primary schools which now exists in France; and I may remark that both Cousin and Guizot adopted nothing and recommended nothing, according to their own acknowledgement, the safety and success of which had not been fully verified by the experience of other countries:

"The most difficult point in law on primary instruction is the determination what are the authorities to be employed. Here also let us consult facts. The French administration is the glory and the master-work of the Imperial Government. The organization of France in *maires* and *prefectures*, with municipal and departmental councils, is the foundation of government and of social order. This foundation has stood firm amidst so much ruin, that prudence and policy seem to point to it as the best and safest prop. Moreover, this organization has just been reformed and vivified by rendering the municipal and departmental councils elective and popular. Thus the French administration unites all that we want—activity and popularity. The administration, then, is what you must call to your aid. Recollect, also, that it is these local councils that pay, and that you cannot fairly expect much from them unless they have a large share in the disbursement of the money they have voted. These councils are chosen out of the body of the people, and return to it again; they are incessantly in contact with the people; they are the people legally represented, as the *maires* and the prefects are these councils embodied, if I may so say, in one person for the sake of activity and dispatch. I regard then, as another incontestible point, the necessary intervention of the municipal and departmental councils in the management of public instruction. *As there ought to be a school in every commune, so there ought to be for every communal school a special committee of superintendence, which ought to be formed out of the municipal council, and presided over by the maire. I shall perhaps be told, that men who are fit to conduct the business of the commune are not fit to superintend the communal school. I deny it: nothing is wanted for this superintendence but zeal, and fathers of families cannot want zeal where their dearest interests are concerned.*"

The only reason assigned for the infringement of our municipal law is, that it is so infringed in the cities and towns of the United States. So says Dr. Ryerson; and to this dictum we have all bowed down with humble submission. We certainly seem to have been a very enlightened people, to have been so successfully duped! The fear is, our population has been in a great measure infidelized and republicanized by United States importations, without being in the least sensible that such a process was going on. And it is a sad reflection that, at the present day, so many should be found unconsciously yielding submission to the same deceptive influence. Notwithstanding, however, that our municipal law has been violated, that in no way affects the validity of the principle that the Council should be supreme, and should exercise an undivided jurisdiction within the municipality in all matters of local concern.

The County, Town, and City Councils are the three corporate powers into whose hands the whole local control should be placed. Each Council could appoint a special committee on education from its own members, and also a Local Superintendent who should act as secretary. The County Council should superintend and regulate the schools in the townships. For many reasons it is the proper authority. In the first place, because every township and incorporated village is represented in the county council by the town reeve. In the second,

because the County Council is a more intelligent and influential body than the Township Council, and less liable to be acted on by local circumstances, interests and prejudices. And in the last place, because township divisions have been found exceedingly detrimental to the formation of proper school limits. The complaints on this latter point are of a very serious nature.

The school fund should be derived from three sources, namely, the Government grant, the municipal assessment and school fees; of which the Government grant and school fees should be appropriated exclusively to pay the teachers' salaries; and the municipal assessment to pay for the renting or building of school houses.

The school buildings and their first outfit should be all paid for by the municipality, from the proceeds of the annual assessment; also a residence for the teacher, or its equivalent in money. In the townships particularly, the teacher ought to have a house and garden plot, and everything should be done to secure his permanent residence in one place. The school houses may be either rented, or may be erected on sites purchased for the purpose, at the option of the municipality. There can be no difficulty in procuring suitable plots of ground, in the way of gift, in the townships, as every one is anxious to have the school as near his own door as possible, and for that reason the ground is always easily attainable.

The organization and management of each school should be left to the inhabitants of the municipality. The heads of families should be left perfectly free to form what combinations they choose If this rule is adopted, it will be found that the choice will partake of a strictly religious character. And this is precisely as it should be. If a sufficient number of heads of families desire to have a combined religious and secular school, the Council would be acting very injudiciously if it denied them the means of establishing one. Neither the Council nor General Government can with propriety interfere, to enforce exclusively secular instruction. Because such a proceeding would be subversive of the religious and moral aim of popular education; in one way, by discarding the moral element, and in the other, by creating dissatisfaction and making the means unacceptable. It is necessary, here, to recollect that the object of popular education is to make a moral as well as a secularly educated people. And as good morals cannot exist independent of religious impressions, that the duty of the State and of Municipal Councils is to promote religious instruction, as well as secular, in the Common Schools. Moreover, a national school system has for its object, not the attendance of a small fraction of the children of school age, as in Toronto, but of all who require instruction. For these reasons, and to realize these objects, the schools must be made acceptable, and

hence the necessity of the heads of families being left to make their own voluntary arrangements. We are to recollect also that a national system is not intended to make Protestants. Neither is its object to make Catholics. The Municipal Council can have nothing to do with this or that particular profession of faith. Its special concern should be the protection of the public morals, by means of all available instrumentalities, whether Protestant or Catholic. If numbers of the Protestant poor are ignorant, and will not receive instruction except through a Protestant channel, by all means let them be accommodated. So that they become possessed of a proper education, it is of little consequence through what particular medium they prefer to receive it. Similarly with the numbers of the Catholic poor, who can neither read nor write, but who would make better subjects and better citizens if endowed with the simple rudiments of learning which are taught in a primary school, would it be prudent, or would it be carrying out the aim of a public school system or the intentions of the Legislature, to withhold instruction because they refuse to accept it in any other than a Catholic garb? Certainly not.

As religion should form an element of instruction, and in order to secure this it is necessary to secure the co-operation of the clergy and congregations; and as the only way to do this is to make the organization and management of the schools acceptable to them, it is therefore indispensable that each school should have a specific religious character; and for this reason, and in accordance with the constitutional law of majorities, the religion of the school should be that of the majority who support it. When a mixed population of Protestants and Catholics is sufficiently numerous, each should have a separate school, or schools, proportioned in size or number to the probable or prospective average attendance in each. If any other Protestant denomination is sufficiently numerous to support a school it should have one on the application of a determinate number of the heads of families. As the religion of the school should be that of the majority who support it, the management should be in the hands of the clergyman and religious congregation of that majority; an exceptional provision being made, that no child of another religious persuasion shall receive or be present at the religious lessons or exercises, if the parents object; and also, that poor children, whose parents are unable to pay the school fees, shall be admitted free of charge.

A Board of examiners would be required in each municipality, to examine the qualifications of teachers, and for the granting of certificates. It should consist of the School Committee of the Council, the Local Superintendent and the Government Inspector, with the Warden or Mayor presiding.

The duties of the School Committee would be to ascertain the amount of assessment required, for the current year, for school purposes; as well the equivalent of the Government grant for teachers' salaries as the fund for school buildings: To receive applications for the opening of schools: To rent or build and keep in repair the school houses of the municipality, as it may see fit: To pay the teachers their portions of the Government grant and the assessed equivalent: To establish and manage an Industrial School Reformatory: To receive and examine the reports of the local managers of the Common Schools: And to prepare an transmit annually to the Minister of Public Instruction a correct report of the state of the schools in the municipality, signed by the Warden or Mayor.

The duties of the local school managers should be first, to appoint a Secretary, who should keep a record of the proceedings of the managers, and fill up all blank returns to the School Superintendent and to the Government Inspector, from a book or register of the daily transactions of the school; the teacher might act as Secretary. Second, to choose and engage a teacher who has passed the Board of Examiners and possesses a certificate of competency. Third, to see that the quality and quantity of secular instruction, prescribed by law, is supplied. Fourth, to see that the school regulations are properly carried out, with respect to cleanliness, regularity, and general moral supervision of the pupils while in school and when absent from school. And in the last place, to report annually to the Warden or Mayor the condition, progress and prosperity of the school; such report to be signed by the clergyman of the congregation.

This is a rough outline of what, in my opinion, should constitute the principal features of that part of the Common School Law applicable to municipalities. Its chief recommendation, it will be perceived, consists in relieving the Councils and Committee of Councils from the difficulties and perpetual strife consequent on their otherwise necessary interference with the religious arrangement of the schools; and leaving the organization of each school to form itself by a natural process of development. While the Committee of Council with its Secretary the Local Superintendent, and the District Government Inspector, would examine the qualification of teachers and grant certificates of qualification; it would in every other respect have its duties confined to finance, for which it is thoroughly competent. Its simplicity is another recommendation, by no means an insignificant one when we take into consideration the endless complaints on the indefiniteness of the present law, its conflicting clauses, the vast number of appeals from school sections to have special clauses construed, and the frequent reference of the Chief Superintendent himself,

to the judicial authorities for expositions of the letter of the law. It would conceal no loop-holes for the exercise of clerico-political craft; supply no facilities for covert and dishonest strategy; and spread out no complicated cobweb to favor the personal schemes and theoretical legerdemain of any public officer.

I have the honor to be, Sir, &c., &c.

A PROTESTANT.

Toronto, 31st March, 1857.

No. III.

SIR,—I have already remarked that the chief requisite of a national system of education is its correspondence with the political institutions and religious feelings of the community. The principle on which our Municipal Councils are responsible to the inhabitants of the municipalities, and the advisers of His Excellency the Governor General to the people, therefore, require that the fiscal power and the patronage connected with it of our Common School System should be, in a similar manner, under popular control. And thus, in conformity with the general principle of responsibility, on which the different parts of the Government are constructed and related to each other, the supervision and management and the whole control of the schools should be divided between the Municipal Councils and the General Government, the only two legitimate centres of all fiscal power and patronage. I have also said that an independent Board of Trustees within a Municipality is an *imperium in imperio*, a positive violation of the principle of municipal government. What else is an independent Chief Superintendent within the jurisdiction of the General Government than an independent sovereignty; a power in the state capable of controlling the Ministers of the state, and holding in *terrorem* both the Governor General and his advisers. The argument is self-convincing, that the same rule which makes an Independent Board of Trustees, incompatible with the duties and functions of a Municipal Council, is applicable to the power, patronage and irresponsibility of a Chief Superintendent, in influencing and overawing the action of the General Government. We all know what the power is which is possessed by every Board of Trustees, that it can demand whatever amount of money it chooses, without limitation, and can squander or do what it chooses with said money; the Municipal Council being obliged to assess and collect in obedience to the demand, having no say either as to the amount or its appropriation. Apparently, the power of the Chief Seperintendent is different only in this, that the amount is fixed by law and the purposes to which it is applied are specific. But, in reality, his power is no less practically than in principle much greater, inasmuch as, besides the nominal limits of his jurisdiction, the institution of Independent Boards of

Trustees is so devised as to make these bodies second his purposes and acquiesce in his decisions. The present constitution of the Boards of School Trustees seems to have been designed with a view expressly to sustain the power of the Chief Superintendent. In like manner the principal clauses of the Common School Act, if examined carefully, will be found to aim at securing this same object. However, in order to understand exactly the nature and extent of the unconstitutional power which the Chief Superintendent is able to bring to bear on the Governor General, on the Ministry and on every Member of the House of Assembly and Legislative Council, it is necessary to analyze the different sources of that power; and to do this we must first go back to 1850, and review the motives by which its concoctors were influenced.

In the first place, the exorbitant patronage and unconstitutional power here referred to, arose out of two elements. One, the ambition of Lord Elgin to acquire popularity. The other, the influence at that time of Dr. Ryerson over the Methodist Conference, and as a popular agitator. The part played by Lord Elgin is not yet properly estimated; but, as the instrument through whom and by whom the rights of the Municipal Councils and the General Government were bartered away and sold for a certain measure of Common School popularity, we are justified in imputing to him, and to him alone, all the blame. To him we are indebted for the legacy of Independent Boards of School Trustees and an almighty Chief Superintendent. Dr. Ryerson, in so far as personal considerations and a desire to improve his private fortune, coupled with the somewhat excusable vanity of being considered a Canadian educational Goliah, may be said to have acted as any unscrupulous person would have done if placed in his circumstances. Perceiving the object of Lord Elgin's ambition, and also the suitableness of the position of each to exchange mutual advantages, he embraced the opportunity not only to secure patronage and its emoluments, but to intrench himself and fortify his official position so as to be able to intimidate and to act defensively against the Legislature, whenever it should so happen that his individual aspirations might require the exercise of such intimidation or defensive action. Now the method which he adopted to intrench and fortify himself, and by which he now exercises a power of intimidation over the Legislature, is that which I am desirous to show was unconstitutional. I am desirous to show that the creation of a ramified chain of irresponsible patronage was the creation of an independent power within the state, incompatible with the independence of the Legislature; and that the proper depository of this patronage should be a Department of the Executive, presided over by a Minister, who should be responsible to the representatives of the people in Parliament, and to the people themselves at the hustings.

First, The conferring on the Boards of Trustees a fiscal power which the Municipal Councils had previously possessed, and which the Councils would not cease to claim as belonging to them by right, at the same time that it made the Boards independent of the Councils with respect to school funds, produced a latent antagonism, between the Councils and Boards of Trustees, which antagonism, as intended, has turned out practically to be an instrument in the hand of the Chief Superintendent. As a proof of which, all appeals and decisions, and all correspondence between the Boards of Common School Trustees and the Superintendent, and the action of either on local or general school matters, indicate an implied league offensive and defensive between them; but which is, in reality, subservient in a special manner to the purpose of the latter functionary.

Second, This instrument of the Chief Superintendent, appoints the Local Superintendents and examines and engages the teachers, by which means the Local Superintendents and the teachers are made indirectly agencies for the maintenance of the Chief Superintendent's influence.

Third, He is entrusted with the expenditure of a large amount of public money, which, in itself, by virtue of the patronage connected with it, has produced and maintains a complicated net work of convergent interests, all tending, in like manner, to add to his individual omnipotence. By reference to the Public Accounts of the Province the various sums, the expenditure of which brings influence to the Chief Superintendent are as follows :—I take the year 1855 in preference to any other, because what has been said, in the preceding pages, on Common School statistics, has had reference to that year. For salaries of officers (exclusive of salaries of Chief and Deputy and two Clerks,) and other contingent expenses of the Normal School, Toronto, £1,500; to facilitate the training of teachers £1,000; to procure plans and publications for the improvement of school architecture and practical science, £200; the Government grant, £24,642 10s. 6d.; further aid to the Normal School and for printing and distributing the Journal of Education, £1,000; for the purchase of books and specimens for a Canadian library and museum, £500; for aid to schools in new and poor townships, £500; for a fund for poor and worn out teachers, £500; for grammar schools, £7,483 10s. 0d.; for providing the Grammar and Common Schools with maps, and apparatus, £2,500; for a Model Grammar School, £1,000; for the payment of two assistant librarians, &c., £350; for the support and maintenance of superannuated teachers, £500; for the payment of the salary of the Inspector of Grammar Schools, £250; and for libraries, £3,500. These monies were paid to Dr. Ryerson in 1855, and the same amounts are paid to him every year, to be expended for the purposes specified. By looking

over the several items the different directions from which patronage may be secured will suggest themselves.

Fourth, The printing press, that mighty engine, made doubly more potent because wielded with an unsparing effusion of public money, has been placed at Dr. Ryerson's disposal. And by its use he has worked unceasingly to stifle enquiry, to prevent the expression of public opinion, and, moreover, has been able to impregnate the electoral constituencies to such an extent that he now holds a coercive influence over their representatives in the Provincial Legislature, and through the means of this coercive influence is able to intimidate the Executive.

Fifth, By the Common School act he is not responsible to Parliament. He is independent of the people's representatives. They cannot call him to account. Because the 34th clause of the Act ignores such responsibility.

Such is an outline of the concessions made, in 1850, by Lord Elgin to Dr. Ryerson, on the condition, that Dr. Ryerson should forthwith act as Lord Elgin's trumpeter. That the terms of the treaty have been fully carried out, on both sides, we have had too many manifestations. Lord Elgin has left us a legacy, in the person of a Chief Superintendent invested with power sufficient to control and intimidate the Legislature. And the question now is how to dispose of it. An *imperium in imperio*, is incompatible with responsible government and constitutional liberty. The irresponsible power exercised by Dr. Ryerson, should be placed in a responsible Department of the Executive Government. And this leads me to consider the constitution of such a Department and its duties.

The Department of Education should consist of a Minister of Public Instruction, who should be a member of the Legislative Assembly, or Legislative Council, and, being the head of a Department of the public service, should have a seat in the Executive Council; and a staff of District Inspectors, whose appointment should be non-political and therefore permanent.

The duties of the Minister of Public Instruction should be to manage the Government correspondence with all educational institutions receiving public aid: To apportion the public grants for education: With reference to the administration of the Common School Law, to conduct all correspondence concerning the Normal Schools already established, or for the erection of others;—to receive applications from any religious denomination, concerning the building of a separate Normal School; and if approved by the Governor in Council and exclusive of the cost of a site, to pay one half the cost of said building and outfit;—to approve or reject the appointment of the Principal of each Normal School;—to make out blank forms for the returns of

Normal and Common Schools, and for the returns of the District Inspectors; to cause the printing and distribution of the school law;—to disallow the use of any book in School that has a tendency to encourage disloyalty to Her Majesty's person and Government or to relax the attachment to the British constitution, or that has a tendency to encourage infidelity or indifferentism in religion;—to ascertain by the reports of the District Inspectors that the amount and quality of secular instruction prescribed by law is supplied in the Schools, and that their religious and moral government is consistent with the public well-being;—to ascertain through the same channel that the tuition fee paid by the children attending the School does not exceed the amount fixed by law;—to abstain from the propagation, officially, of theoretical and speculative dogmas on which public opinion is divided; —to attend to all business specified in the Common School Act pertaining to the Normal and Common Schools;—and to report annually how the business of the Department has been administered.

The duties of the District Inspectors, who might each have the inspection of a district of country extending over one or more counties, should be to visit the Common Schools, examine the Registers, and note the general condition of the educational work going on; also to inspect the Normal and Grammar Schools; to attend the meetings of the Boards of Examiners in each municipality, and to assist in the examination of teachers. They should correspond with the Education Office as occasion might require, and annually furnish a correct report to the Minister of Public Instruction.

By this, it will be seen that, the duties of the Education office and of the Minister would be strictly financial and inspectoral; and therefore could be best performed by a person of practical ability and ordinary business tact; of whom the present Administration contains many creditable examples.

In framing a new Common School Act, its provisions would require to be in accordance with the relative functions of the several school authorities specified in this letter and the one preceding. The tuition fee should be a fixed amount and sufficiently low not to press heavily on poor parents who have many children to educate. If deficient for the payment of teachers' salaries, the annual grant from the public revenue should be increased. The secular branches of education to be taught in the Common Schools, should be reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and Grammar; in short, such branches as are indispensable in the ordinary business of life. But besides these, and within certain limitations, good effects would result in various ways, from allowing the teachers, for an additional tuition fee, to give instruction on the globes and also in the rudiments of Latin and Greek. A minimum salary to the teachers should be fixed upon. Above that, the increase should be regulated by the average attendance exhibited

on the School Register of the preceding year. To encourage teachers to continue in the profession and improve their opportunities, a rule should be made, that those who have served a specified number of years and are otherwise competent shall have a preference in all vacancies where a Local Superintendent or District Inspector is required. Other provisions, which in the meantime have escaped my notice, may be necessary. Those mentioned here, are, however, the principal.

That a measure framed in accordance with the general principles here enunciated, however different in details, will become a law either during this or the next Session of the Provincial Parliament is uncertain. The probability is, judging from the general aspect which the Common School dissensions have assumed, that a change of some kind is immediate. Whatever that change may be, it will be found when it does take place, to consist in the assumption by the General Government and the Municipal Councils of the powers now vested in the Chief Superintendent and the Boards of School Trustees. Of this there can be no shadow of doubt. The only particular point of the measure which may be brought forward, and regarding the ultimate definite character of which there may be some doubt, is the classification of Common Schools under Protestant and Catholic distinctions, admitting only two classes of schools; or of denominational schools entitling each religious persuasion with the privilege of establishing and managing Separate Schools.

Denominational Schools I consider preferable, because they secure, directly, the co-operation of the clergy and the heads of families of the religious congregations. Without that co-operation no school can ever prosper; but it can be secured only by enlisting the sympathies of the clergy and congregations in the way I have specified, and throwing on them the chief measure of responsibility. But if the leading Protestant denominations should withhold their countenance from a measure favoring Separate Denominational Schools, then there can be but one course left for the Legislature to adopt, that is, to pass a law establishing Protestant Common Schools and Catholic Common Schools. Much as I should regret to witness the necessity of this alternative, still I can see no other way of putting an end to the otherwise interminable school dissensions and injustice with which the present law and its administration are replete. Something must be speedily done to make the School Law acceptable. In a population of 1,500,000 Protestants and 1,500,000 Catholics, none but a mad man or an inexperienced enthusiast could ever have dreamed of being able to make the one body hold the other in fetters. Lord Elgin cannot be accused of such imbecility. He acted from a different impulse. But setting aside the injustice, the intolerance of compelling Catholics to receive education on Protestant conditions, where was its practica-

bility? What data did Dr. Ryerson assume for his calculation, that he could make 1,500,000 Protestants rule 1,500,000 Catholics in school matters? Had he not before his eyes the failure of a somewhat similar attempt by Lord Durham to make the Protestants of Upper Canada coerce the Catholics of Lower Canada? Had he forgotten how the Rod forged by Lord Durham for this purpose was afterwards taken hold of and made use of by the Hon. L. H. Lafontaine to punish Upper Canada? And does he presume that no other Lafontaine will arise to vindicate the honor of Lower Canada and secure equal justice to Catholics? Look at the facts existing now, and those which existed at the time Dr. Ryerson managed to get into his present office, and mark the contrast. Then Protestants and Catholics were politically united. Whatever feuds existed were confined to particular localities in which the Orange Societies were predominant; and were attributable to previous animosities which had found their way into the Province from Ireland. But such a thing as a powerful and increasing Catholic organization, such as we now witness, had then no existence. It had not begun. It was not then thought of. Our present prospect is that the Protestant School Rod forged by Dr. Ryerson to coerce Catholics, contains its own antidote; that it will snuff out both Dr. Ryerson and his system, and be the means of establishing Catholic Schools free from Protestant control and interference. Like Lord Durham, Dr. Ryerson will find that he has calculated on wrong data and reasoned on false premises. He will find that he has been the means of damaging the Protestant cause; and that he is the greatest enemy which Protestantism has met with in Canada.

In bringing these letters to a close, permit me, Sir, to say that I submit them, with the greatest deference, to your superior practical judgment, and that the only motive by which they have been dictated is a desire to relieve the General Government, and the Municipal Councils, and the members of the Legislature, as well as the Catholic population and a numerous body of Protestants, from the gigantic and pernicious political influence which is exercised in the administration of the present Common School Law.

I have the honor to be, Sir, &c., &c.

A PROTESTANT.

Toronto, April 7, 1857.