

Immediately after his appointment he went to Europe, and remained there and in the United States for over a year, making himself familiar with systems of education in these countries. On his return, he submitted to the Government an elaborate report on a "System of Public Instruction for Upper Canada," which was published in 1846. He also prepared a draft of a School Bill to give effect to the recommendations contained in his report, so far as rural schools were concerned. In the following year he prepared a comprehensive measure in regard to schools in cities, towns, and incorporated villages.

It was not to be expected that so comprehensive a scheme of education as that proposed by Dr. Ryerson would meet with general acceptance. The very reverse was the fact. It was assailed as revolutionary and oppressive. It certainly was revolutionary in the best sense; but not oppressive, for it was largely permissive and wholly tentative. And, for many years the town of Richmond, in the County of Carleton, refused to establish schools under its provisions. The new measures were so far revolutionary that they differed almost wholly from the former projected school acts. The system proposed was composite. Its machinery was adopted chiefly from the State of New York. The principle upon which the schools were to be supported was taken from New England—Normal schools, from Germany, and the uniform series of school books, from Ireland. All were, however, so blended together and harmonized, to meet the requirements and circumstances of the country that they became, in Dr. Ryerson's moulding hands, "racy of the soil."

Up to this time no one but Dr. Ryerson had been able to give a practical turn to the rather crude theories which had been held on the subject of popular education. He, however, had to pay the penalty of all such reformers; but yet he lived to see the fuller details of his system of education worked out on his own lines.

It is needless to say that Dr. Ryerson's scheme was assailed as impracticable. This, I have explained. It was held to be too comprehensive for the country. Even his reference to the compact and systematized plan adopted in Prussia was seized upon as an indication of his covert design to introduce the baneful system of so-called "Prussian despotism." His commendation of "free schools," as a prospective feature of our educational system, was denounced as an attempt to legalize an "outrageous robbery," and as a communistic "war against property."

Several District Councils arrayed themselves in opposition to the new order of things. One of them, in the west, objected to the establishment of a Normal School, and, in a memorial to the Legislature, maintained the desirability of "securing, as heretofore, the services of those whose physical disabilities from age