

CHAPTER VIII.

COUNTY SCHOOL CONVENTIONS HELD BY THE CHIEF
SUPERINTENDENT IN 1853.

By reference to page 133 of the Seventh Volume of this Documentary History, it will be seen that the first of the County School Conventions of Upper Canada was held by the Chief Superintendent of Education in 1847.*

The following is a copy of a Circular issued by the Chief Superintendent in January, 1853, giving Notice to the various County School authorities of his intention to hold a Second School Convention of the friends of Education in each County of Upper Canada in the ensuing Months. The objects for which these important Conventions were held are fully stated in the accompanying Circular:—

CIRCULAR TO THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS, LOCAL SUPERINTENDENTS, VISITORS, TRUSTEES, AND
TEACHERS OF COMMON SCHOOLS IN UPPER CANADA.

In the course of the next two Months, the Undersigned proposes, Providence permitting, to visit each County, or union of Counties, in Upper Canada, for the purpose of holding in each, a COUNTY SCHOOL CONVENTION of all School Officers and other friends of General Education, who may choose to attend.

2. It will be recollected, that all Clergymen, Judges, Members of the Legislature, Members of County Councils, and Aldermen are School Visitors; also, that the School Law of 1850 makes it the duty of Local Superintendents to attend such Conference; and the Undersigned will be happy to meet and confer not only with all School Visitors and Local Superintendents, but as many Trustees, Teachers, and Friends of Education generally, as can make it convenient to attend,—including, of course, such Trustees and other School Officers and promoters of Education as may reside in the Cities, Towns, or Incorporated Villages, of each County, or union of Counties, within the limits of which a County School Convention shall be held. The object of each County Convention will be:—

(1). To answer any Questions which may be proposed, and give any explanation which may be desired, respecting the several provisions of the Common School Law.

(2). To consider any suggestions which may be made for its improvement.

(3). To consider any suggestions which may be made as to the best Regulations in regard to Public School Libraries, and their relation to County, Township, and School Municipalities; also Teachers' Institutes, and the mode of constituting and managing them. There are so many considerations involved in the establishment of Public Libraries and Teachers' Institutes, that the Undersigned is unwilling to decide upon and submit Official Regulations respecting them, without as large and free a consultation as possible with experienced and interested parties throughout the Country.

3. And, as it is intended, during the approaching semi-Session of the Legislature, to propose, (not any changes in the General Provisions of the existing School Law, but) some Supplementary Provisions to improve provisions and to enlarge its capabilities for doing good, the Undersigned is anxious to be favoured with every suggestion which the experience and administration of the Law may have furnished to Local School Authorities. It will be desirable to have all questions and suggestions to be proposed at each County Convention, prepared and presented in writing.

* This was inaugurated, in 1846-47, a series of County School Conventions which, at intervals of about five years each, were held all over the Country. The early ones involved travelling in all kinds of weather and in all kinds of conveyances, so as to keep engagements made weeks before. They were, however, of immense service to the Education Department in removing prejudice, settling difficulties and solving doubts as to the practicability of plans proposed for improving the condition of the Schools and raising the intellectual and social status of the Teacher. *Ryerson Memorial Volume*, page 82.