

\$121,053. In addition to this, the Trustees have collected the sum of \$1,224,247, of which \$1,191,417 have been expended for School purposes.

2. It is worthy of remark, that among the Teachers employed in the Common and Separate Schools, are 462 Roman Catholic Teachers,—about 150 of whom teach in Separate Schools, but upwards of 300 are employed by the Trustees of the Public Common Schools,—a practical illustration of the liberality of the people, and of the injustice of the imputation made against them, in regard to their conduct towards their Roman Catholic fellow citizens. It is questionable whether, in a Country of equal population, and as Roman Catholic, as Upper Canada is Protestant, more than 300 Protestant Teachers would be employed by locally elected Trustees. This fact may largely account for the unwillingness of Roman Catholics generally to separate themselves and their Children from the Public Schools, since three-fourths of their Children attend the Public Schools, while only one-fourth of them attend the Separate Schools, and, since the aggregate attendance at the Separate Schools has decreased 1,077, while the aggregate attendance at the Public Schools has increased 14,106. Were there no Separate Schools, a larger number of Roman Catholic Teachers would doubtless be employed in the Public Schools; but, as it is, the Roman Catholic is only exceeded by three other Churches in the number of its Members who are employed as Teachers of Common Schools in Upper Canada.—an ample illustration of the equality of the law and of the catholicity of its administration, even by the people themselves in their several School Sections.

3. Another fact worthy of remark is, that, while there has been a decline and depression in almost every branch of business and of the Public Revenue, there has been a steady advancement in the progress of the Schools, whether we regard the means provided for their support, the attendance of Pupils, the qualifications of Teachers, the character and Furniture of the School-Houses, or the methods and facilities of instruction.

4. Equally remarkable is the progress made by the Free Schools. In 1850, no Free Schools existed in Upper Canada; nor did the Legislature exercise the power to establish them, but simply empowered the rate-payers in each School division to use their own discretion as to the manner of providing for the support of their Schools. The question was thus an open one in each School Municipality, to be decided upon in Cities, Towns, and Incorporated Villages, by the election of Trustees, as favourable, or otherwise, to Free Schools, but to be decided upon by an annual vote at Annual, or Special, Meetings in the School Sections of Townships. The result has been, that the comparative merits of the Free, and Ratebill, School System has been discussed and decided upon, from year to year, in each School Municipality, and the principle that each man should contribute to the state-interest of the education of youth according to his property, and each child, whether his parents are rich, or poor, should have an equal right to an education necessary for the interests of society, has gained from year to year, until 2,903 of the 4,019 Common Schools in operation are free, with a considerable number of Grammar Schools; and the increase of Free Schools during the year 1861 was no less than 302,—making a difference of 604 in the relative proportion of Free and Ratebill Schools.

5. Finally, every year's experience strengthens my conviction as to the truth and wisdom of the principle on which our Public School System is founded,—the only true principle, I think, for the education and advancement of a free people,—for the Government not to assume the task of educating the people, but to aid them in every possible way to educate themselves,—not to rule and do for them, but to counsel and assist them,—not to supersede local exertion, but to develop and encourage it,—to habituate and train the people to rely upon themselves, to learn how to manage their own affairs, and to work out their own destinies. Under the influence of such a School System, in connection with our free system of Constitutional Government, and by the Divine Blessing, I believe the destinies of our Country will harmonize with the highest aspirations of patriotism and Christianity.