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THE COUNTY SCHOOL CONVENTIONS.

We are glad to see that attention has been called by the press generally to the importance of the School Conventions which are now being held by the Chief Superintendent of Education in each County of Upper Canada.

The topics brought under the notice of the Conventions have, on the whole, been discussed in a fair and practical spirit by the press, as may be seen by reference to two editorial articles from the *Hamilton Spectator*, and some short notices from other journals, which we insert in this number of the *Journal*.

The progress of our school system has, thus far, been very satisfactory. And although prejudice was excited against it at first, it has lived down these prejudices, and has had the good fortune to carry with it for many years the public sentiment of the country. It has further, by its success, commended itself to the intelligent educators of other countries. Many of the chief features of the Upper Canada system have been incorporated in that of Victoria (in Australia), and latterly in that of the sister province of Nova Scotia. British Columbia has also profited by our school experience, and within the last month the State Librarian of Tennessee, in a letter to the Department, says:—"Col. Borson, member of the Senate, has introduced into that body a Bill for the thorough reform of the educational system of our State, and has drawn a great deal of most valuable information from your documents."

The reasons for the popularity and success of our school system, although well known to those among us who have given any attention to the subject, are not so apparent to strangers. We were much struck by a remark made by the Hon. Mr. Shannon, of Nova Scotia, at the dinner given in this city to the commercial delegates from the maritime provinces. He said: "They were endeavouring, in Nova Scotia, to model their school system upon that of Canada West, and to obtain the sanction of the people to the necessary taxation it would incur; and they had been anxious to see Dr. Ryerson to learn from him how to gild the pill, and to know how he had made taxation to go down with the people of this country."

Now, the true secret of "gilding of the pill" in Upper Canada is found in the fact that the law leaves it to the rate-payers themselves, in the primary meetings of their rural sections, to determine, without let or hindrance, whether or not their school shall be supported to a greater or less extent by a rate self-imposed upon the property of the section—that is, the rate-payers have the sole right to tax themselves for the support of their school. This is the true spirit of the law, and this may be fairly taken as a specimen of the general scope and intention of the Act.

There are, however, several features in the law which are susceptible of modification and improvement. But before making any material change in its provisions, it has been the policy of the Department to hold free consultations on the subject with the people themselves at County School Conventions. The topics brought before the present meetings are sufficiently indicated in the official circular on the subject, published in the last number of this *Journal*. The most important change proposed is the substitution of Township for School Section Boards of School Trustees. Experience in the working of the present system has shown its inherent defects, which time has not remedied; and the almost unanimous adoption of the Township system in several of the neighbouring States, prove that public opinion there has pronounced largely in its favour. On this point, we would direct the attention of our readers to the information on this subject, which is given in the *Journal of Education* for July, 1864, and which contains the recommendations and experience on this subject of the school authorities in the States of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana. The system was tried with success some years ago, in the District of Niagara, and it has been working well for several years in the Township of Enniskillen, now so famous for its rich oil wells.