

2. By the Third clause of the Twenty-fourth Section of the School Act of 1850, each Board of Trustees in Cities, Towns and Villages is authorized "to do whatever they may judge expedient for the establishment of a School Library, or School Libraries." In the terms of my [following] Circular to Township Councils, I beg that you will inform me, at your earliest convenience, and at the latest by the Twentieth of next September, what sum, (in addition to any sum I may be able to apportion from the School Library Grant,) you will cause to be raised between this and the first day of next July, for the establishment of a School Library, or School Libraries; at what time you will be prepared to advance such sum; and what Books you desire, or in what manner you wish to have them selected.

TORONTO, August 3rd, 1853.

EGERTON RYERSON.

2. CIRCULAR TO TOWN-REEVES OF TOWNSHIPS ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

I herewith transmit to you, to be laid before the Council over which you have been chosen to preside, a copy of the Catalogue of the Books which have been sanctioned, according to law, for Public School Libraries, and also a copy of the Regulations according to which these Libraries are to be established and conducted,*—thus completing the arrangements for giving effect to the last, if not the most important, branch of our System of Public Elementary Instruction.†

2. By the School Library Regulations, it will be seen, that the widest discretion possible is confided to the Township Municipalities, in the kind of Libraries and mode of establishing them, while the duties of all parties concerned in the management and use of these Libraries are so fully and plainly stated, as to prevent all doubts, or mistakes, respecting them. The local Councils and Trustees are relieved from the responsibility and odium of imposing penalties, or forfeitures, in any case whatever; these are all specified in the General Regulations, and it only remains for the Municipal and School Authorities to investigate and decide upon the facts of each case of alleged delinquency, and act accordingly. The most of these Regulations,—especially those which relate to the forfeitures incurred for the detention, loss, or abuse of Books,—are adopted from the corresponding Regulations of the State of New York, where much experience has been acquired in the management of Public School Libraries. And that experience has shown that a strict adherence to these Regulations is absolutely necessary to the maintenance of harmony among all parties concerned, and to the preservation and usefulness of the Libraries themselves.

3. In preparing these Regulations, I have sought to give effect to the views and feelings which were generally expressed at nearly all the County School Conventions which I attended last Winter.‡ But these Regulations are necessarily an experiment in this Country. It is very possible, if not probable, that experience may suggest some modifications of them. I shall, in common with the other Members of the Council of Public Instruction, be happy to be favoured with the results of your own experience and observation on the operation of these Regulations; for I am intensely anxious that we should not only have, in all its branches and aspects, the best School System in the World, but that our fellow-citizens at large should feel that it is so, and that it is their own—the creation of their joint counsels, efforts, and patriotism—their own priceless legacy to posterity.

4. In regard to the selection and procuring of the Books mentioned in the Catalogue, I may observe, that it is not easy to conceive, and it is needless that I should attempt to describe, the amount of time, labour, and anxiety which has been expended in devising and maturing this System of Public School Libraries, in making arrangements in Great Britain and the United States for procuring these Books on advantageous terms, and in selecting them from a much larger number of works on the same subjects;§ nor am I yet able myself to form an accurate idea of the extent of the additional labour and responsibility incurred by making this Department the medium and agent of providing the Public School Libraries throughout the Province with the Books for which the Municipalities may think proper to apply. But on no part of the work which I have undertaken, do I reflect with more interest and pleasure than that of rendering accessible to all the Municipalities of Upper Canada,—even the most remote,—Books of instruction and useful entertainment, which would not have otherwise come

* The Catalogue and Regulations were printed in copies of the *Journal of Education for Upper Canada*, which was sent out with these Circulars.

† In his original Report of 1846 on a "System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada," Doctor Ryerson pointed out the great importance and utility of Public School Libraries. See page 210 of the Sixth Volume of this Documentary History; also pages 204, 206 and 240 of the same Volume.

‡ For copies of the Resolutions in regard to Libraries adopted at these Conventions, see Chapter X of this Volume.

§ For an account in detail of these Arrangements, See pages 192, 197-199 and 293 of the Tenth Volume of this Documentary History.