

To the Trustees of \_\_\_\_\_

School Section, No. \_\_\_\_\_

in the Township of \_\_\_\_\_

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Ireland and England, in order that the Ministers, as well as the Municipal and School Representatives of the people, may be able to judge of the merits of our own School System as compared with the systems which have been adopted in Great Britain and Ireland, for the promotion of elementary education. In Ireland, every possible effort has been made to ascertain to what extent, and in what form, religious can be combined with secular instruction in mixed schools. The results of the varied and long tried experiments are given in the documents referred to, and seem fully to justify the course which has been adopted in Upper Canada on this subject.

Nevertheless, if anything more can be done for the improvement of our School System in this, or indeed in any other respect, I shall be happy to do what I can to accomplish it; and for this purpose I desire to avail myself of the results of your own reflection and observation, as well as of those associated with you in promoting the interests of religion through the agency of your Church.

I think it proper, at the same time, to state summarily the principles on which our Public School System is founded, and which I have employed my best endeavors to guard and carry into effect. The following principles lie at the foundation of our School System:—

1. The right of each Municipality to arrange its School Sections or divisions in its own discretion.

2. The right of the School-rate payers in each division to select, through their elected representatives, their own teacher, and to establish and support their School in such manner as they shall judge best, simply restricting the amount of rate-bills on pupils so as not to be oppressive to the poorer parents.

4. The equal protection of the rights of Protestants and Roman Catholics in the Schools, against compulsion on the part of the Government as also from any other quarter. In a letter addressed by me, in July, 1849, to the first Law Officer of the Crown in Upper Canada, this principle was stated in the following words: "I have not assumed it to be the duty, or even constitutional right, of the Government to *compel* anything in respect to religious books or religious instruction, but to *recommend* the Local Trustees to do so, and to provide powers and facilities to enable them to do so within the wise restriction imposed by law. I have also respected the rights and scruples of the Roman Catholic as well as those of the Protestant; and

### OFFICIAL CIRCULAR FROM THE CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION TO THE VARIOUS RELIGIOUS BODIES IN REGARD TO RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF UPPER CANADA.

I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of the Regulations which the Council of Public Instruction have adopted according to law, in reference to Religious Instruction in the Common Schools of Upper Canada; and I respectfully request that you will have the kindness to lay these Regulations, as well as this letter, before the [Synod, Union or Conference, &c.,] for their consideration, and the expression of their views, as to whether the said Regulations are satisfactory, or whether, in their opinion, any further (and if so, what further) provisions can, in their judgment, be made for Religious Exercises and Instruction in Schools consisting of children of different religious persuasions.

I beg to be informed of the result of the deliberations desired, as also of your own views on the important question of Religious Exercises and Instruction in the Public Schools of this country, composed, as they are, of pupils of various religious persuasions,—a question which has engaged my anxious inquiries and consideration for many years.

I have recently caused to be forwarded to each of the various Clergy in Upper Canada, as far as I could ascertain their addresses, a copy of my last Annual Report, containing an account, from official documents, of the National School System in