

altogether in the case of resident children, only about 400 schools out of a total of 4,000 in the Province, but had already discarded it of their own choice, and had practically removed all possible restrictions upon the attendance at our Public Schools.

Contemporary with this change in school maintenance, came the change in school inspection, the adoption of a "Programme of Studies," and the proposition for additional Normal Schools, thus completing as it were the fabric so well begun.

The amount of labor requisite to the development of a school system, requiring so much attention to detail as well as design, cannot easily be estimated. The judgment to eliminate from foreign systems what was not adapted to the conditions of a new country—the courage to defend what was excellent against the prejudices and the jealousies of opponents—the tact to tone down opposition or to launch a new scheme upon public favor at the most opportune moment, are all qualities of the highest order, and qualities which Dr. Ryerson possessed in a very high degree. His shrewdness in the management of those whose influence might contribute to the success of his plans, and his own enthusiasm in the prosecution of his designs, have placed him in the first rank as a diplomatist and have, in a very great measure, contributed to his success. True, he has sometimes forgotten the non-political character of his position—he has sometimes entered the lists against men who were "foemen worthy of his steel," and against whom there was no necessity of declaring war—he has even made use of language at times harsh and recriminatory, but at no time can it be charged that he lost sight of the great interests of education, or sacrificed, (though he might have endangered), his own usefulness, for political favor. And now when retiring, as doubtless he will ere long retire, from a position he has so well and so worthily occupied, he can look back upon

a career that has been characterized by the most marvelous progress, and can congratulate himself on having contributed as much, perhaps more, than any public man in Canada ever did, to the intellectual development of the people, and to the creation of those forces which, though not seen, are the most potent in forming national character, and in giving an impetus to the prosperity of the whole country. It is then, with the deepest regret that we regard his retirement from the position of Chief Superintendent of Education. We know not how soon it may be, but there is little doubt it must be ere long. We are glad to think that when it does take place, it will be purely voluntary, and with the deepest regrets of the people whose interests he has for upwards of a quarter of a century so faithfully advanced.

Immediately connected with the subject of Dr. Ryerson's retirement is that of appointing a successor. There are but three ways in which the Education Department can be conducted; either as at present, under a Superintendent—as a Department of some Minister, or under a separate Head as the Minister of Education. The latter mode prevails in France and Prussia, but so far as Ontario is concerned we think it somewhat objectionable. There is no doubt but that by this system the Department of Public Instruction might *appear* to be more directly under the control of the government, and the idea of *immediate* responsibility more fully carried out. But then it would subject our educational system to those vicissitudes and annoyances which are inseparable from political reverses, and might lead to unpleasant and unprofitable interference with existing regulations. To have a new Head to our Educational Department with every change of Government—to subject our Public or High Schools to the whims of every new Minister, might be very damaging. A system of Education to be of any real service must

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