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\*. Parties in correspondence with the Educational Department will please quote the number and date of any previous letters to which they may have occasion to refer as it is extremely difficult for the Department to keep trace of isolated cases, where so many letters are received (upwards of 500 per month) on various subjects.

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS IN UPPER CANADA—1853.

Statistics are sober facts. Though often eloquent, they have none of the illusion of romance. They are the pulse of national health and progress. They indicate its prosperity or its decay; and for this reason they are zealously and carefully compiled, and, by statesmen and public men, as carefully and anxiously scanned. They severely test alike the elaborate theory and the most carefully digested scheme. Viewed in this light they are of the utmost importance in testing our educational progress.

Impressed with a conviction of the present, as well as prospective, value of minute and accurate statistics in regard to the yearly operations of our national system of schools, as a basis for future improvements, the head of the Educational Department for Upper Canada has officially collected, through the local school authorities, each year, a great variety of information relating to the working of every part of that system. This information has been embodied from time to time in his Annual Reports to the Governor General, and laid before the Legislature during each Session of Parliament.

The result of these extended and minute examinations and enquiries from year to year has been in every respect most cheering and gratifying. Not that our progress has been equally certain and satisfactory in every department, or every feature of our school system; but we are now in possession of a series of yearly observations and facts, in regard, not only to our successes, but to our failures; showing alike our educational enterprise, and our culpable negligence in the performance of a public and important duty;—not only that tens of thousands of children are being trained up to intelligence and virtue in our public schools, but that thousands more never visit a school at all,\* or, if they do, it is but transiently; that in our cities and towns, while every facility for education is being liberally provided by the public, numbers choose to grow up in ignorance and vice, without control or restraint, and in violation of the implied social compact between citizens and communities.

It is satisfactory to know, however, that at every test-point of our system, patriotism, and philanthropy unite to sustain, extend and perpetuate it; and were it not that selfishness and avarice too frequently influence some parents to sanction the absence of their children from school, on the slightest pretext or pressure of business—to starve their intellect so as to enrich their pocket—the reproach which now exists would cease for ever.

One or too striking facts have become apparent in compiling a somewhat novel Table for the Chief Superintendent's Annual Report for 1853. The table consists entirely of negatives. It is designed to show the number of children in each county, city, and town, who *do not* attend school, the per centage of the population who *cannot* read or write, the number of sections in which *no* rate was imposed by the trustees for the support of the school, and also those sections

in which *no* lectures were delivered during the year by local superintendents, as required by law.

It is a singular coincidence, as exhibited by these tables, that the facts which they reveal all bear a mutual relation to, and are the exponents of, each other. Thus, for instance, it appears, that in those counties in which a large per centage of the population cannot read and write, there is an equally large per centage of the children which do not attend school;—few rates are imposed and few lectures delivered, in this way perpetuating the very disgrace or misfortune which already exists in the locality. On the other hand, where the great majority of the people can read and write, there the absence from school is comparatively infrequent, larger rates are imposed, and more lectures are delivered by the local superintendents.

One thing is evident from this table of negatives, that those persons, who have never themselves enjoyed the advantages of education, are instinctively opposed to placing it within the reach of their children: thus proving that, although they may have acquired wealth and a degree of influence without the aid of education, they are nevertheless utterly unable to appreciate the value of that mental discipline which would doubtless fit their children for attaining to still higher positions of honour, benevolence and usefulness in their country.

The condensed statistics, which we give below, are taken from the proof-sheets of the Chief Superintendent's Annual Report, for 1853. They exhibit the following interesting facts and contrasts:—

In 1844, three years after the system was first organized, the number of common schools in operation in Upper Canada, was 2,610, (and many of them very inferior indeed,) while, in 1853, the number reported as in operation—many of which, are very superior, and all of them greatly improved in every essential particular—was 3,133, an advance of twenty per cent. The multiplication of schools however does not necessarily indicate an improvement. The policy of the Department has been rather to encourage an enlargement of the boundaries of existing sections than to multiply new and feeble ones. The result has been the extinction of many of the old schools, and the re-division of townships into more compact and stronger school sections, sustained at a less aggregate expense to the township at large. The increase in the number of good schools has therefore been about 1,000, and has taken place in new townships and in the hitherto unsettled parts of old townships.

In 1844, the number of pupils reported as attending the common schools in Upper Canada, out of a school population of 183,539, between the ages of 5 and 16 years, was 46,756; while in 1853, the number reported as attending school, out of a school population of 268,957 was 194,786; showing therefore that while the school population has not *doubled*, the school attendance has nearly *quintupled* that of 1844; or in other words: while in 1844 the school attendance was only *one fourth* that of the school population, it is now nearly *three fourths* that of the entire school population! Cheering facts certainly.

In 1844, the total amount available from all sources for the payment of teachers' salaries in Upper Canada, was £51,714 or \$206,866, while in 1853 it was \$524,156, or an increase of upwards of one hundred per cent. in nine years.

In 1850 (beyond which year our statistics on some of these points do not extend) the grand total available from all sources for teachers' salaries, the erection and repairs of school houses, and the purchase of school apparatus and requisites, amounted to upwards of \$400,000, while in three years it reached the noble sum of \$646,676, or *upwards of half a million of dollars*—more than three-fourths of which large sum was raised by the voluntary action of the people themselves, in their several localities. The additional amount reported as received and expended by grammar and other schools and colleges, was \$151,240, thus making it appear that \$797,916 were available for the purposes of promoting general education in Upper Canada during the year 1853. No doubt the current year will witness enterprise and zeal no less creditable to Upper Canada, and no less gratifying to every lover and promoter of his country's educational advancement.

\* The returns for the year 1853 reveal the fact that of the 268,957 children of school age in Upper Canada, only 194,786 are reported as attending the Common Schools, and about 7,758 the grammar and private schools, thus leaving about 66,463 children destitute of the blessings of education.