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CHAPTER XXVIII.

STATE OF EDUCATION IN UPPER CANADA IN THE EARLY DAYS.

EARLY EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH COMMON SCHOOLS.

In 1816, seven years after the establishment of District Grammar Schools, a praiseworthy effort was made to provide for the establishment and maintenance of Common Schools.* A liberal grant of \$24,000 a year, for four years, was made as an experiment. Whether the experiment was a success, or not, does not appear, but in 1820, the grant was reduced to \$10,000 a year. The result was that Schools were closed up here and there, all over the Province, inflicting grievous hardship on many worthy Settlers, and (in the scornful language of the day, and even of parliamentary utterances), many unworthy Teachers also.

In regard to the state of education in Upper Canada in 1817, and the fluctuating character of its progress since the settlement of the Province, in 1784, up to that time, Mr. Gourlay, a well-known Canadian Politician and Author, writes as follows:—

"There is no College in Upper Canada, but there are said to be several Townships of land set apart for the purpose of endowing such an Institution, when the population and circumstances of the Province shall require it.

"No provision is made by the law for Free Schools. The inhabitants of the several Townships are left to a voluntary support of Schools, according to their own discretion.

"An Act of the Provincial Legislature, in 1807, granted a Hundred pounds a year to the Teacher of one School, in each of the eight Districts under the direction of Trustees. In some Districts the School thus provided for is made a Free School; but in other Districts the salary was considered as a public encouragement to a Teacher of literary eminence, in addition to the compensation received for the tuition of each scholar."—*Statistical Account of Upper Canada, etc., by Robert Gourlay, 2 volumes. London, 1822.*

The Reverend Doctor Strachan became a Master of one of these Schools, and Reverend George Ryerson and his Brother, Egerton, Master and Usher of another.

*In 1816, an Act was passed granting £800 for the purchase of a Library for the use of the Legislative Council and House of Assembly.