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HIRAM ROBINSON, ESQ.,
CHAIRMAN PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD, OTTAWA.

It is so generally admitted that the extraordinary advance of public education in Canada is, in a very large measure, due to the admirable Public School system devised and brought into vigorous operation by the Rev. Dr. Ryerson, ably seconded by his Deputy, Dr. Hodgins, during the whole period of his incumbency, that it seems hardly necessary to allude to the fact, but it is equally true, though not so generally taken into account, that but for the intelligent zeal and hearty co-operation of scores and hundreds of noble-minded men, who, without fee or reward, save the consciousness of a patriotic duty well performed, have, as trustees, in their various localities, worked out the principles of the system, its success could not possibly have been so fully and extensively assured.

Among the cities and towns which have profited most by this philanthropic devotion, Ottawa takes a foremost rank, and among the men who have expended their best energies in the work, Mr. Hiram Robinson, Chairman of the Public School Board of that city (whose portrait accompanies this article), must take a leading place.

Mr. Robinson is a native-born Canadian, and, as his debonaire countenance indicates, a man in the full prime and vigour of life. He was born in the Township of West Hawkesbury, County of Prescott, in the year 1831, and is consequently forty-eight years of age. His own education was acquired in the Public and Grammar Schools of his county, which apparently has stood him in good stead, for from his early manhood to the present, he has filled offices of trust and responsibility in the great lumbering house of Hamilton Brothers, of whose extensive business in Ottawa he has been general manager since 1872.

Mr. Robinson was first elected school trustee in 1867, and as his biennial terms expired, was invariably re-elected by acclamation, than which no better evidence could be adduced of the high estimate placed upon his services by his fellow-citizens. Upon the retirement from the Board of the late Mr. Slater in 1871, Mr. Robinson was chosen Chairman, and year by year has been re-appointed to the office by the unanimous vote of his colleagues.

In 1867 the Public School Board of Ottawa did not own any school houses, but since then they have erected seven, six of which are large substantial buildings, with spacious grounds attached,

and furnished with all the appliances necessary to the successful accomplishment of the purpose for which they were erected. These buildings have cost something over \$72,000, and it may be doubted whether any other city in Ontario, in proportion to population, is better provided for in this respect.

It may also be worthy of remark that so well satisfied have the ratepayers been with the management of the Board that, large as the outlay has been, the chief promoters of it, among whom the Chairman occupies a foremost place, have, term by term, been re-elected either by acclamation or by very large majorities. Of these we may name Messrs. Kirby, LeSueur, Bronson, and Barber, chairmen respectively of the Furnishing, Management, Building, and Finance Committees.



(From a photograph by J. W. Topley, Ottawa.)

In 1867, the number of children on the rolls was 1,449 and the amount expended for education \$6,613.09; to-day the number is 8,100, and the annual expenditure \$28,216.18. The Chairman being himself a man of high moral tone, the proceedings of the Board, ever since his occupancy of the Chair, have uniformly been marked by courtesy and harmony—pleasant and honorable alike to himself and his colleagues.

The remarkable efficiency of the Public Schools of Ottawa was very emphatically recognized by the late Chief Superintendent and his excellent Deputy, and more recently by the Hon. Mr. Crooks, the present Minister of Education, himself, who went to that city last year for the express purpose of making a personal examination into the condition and working of those institutions.

On the occasion of the above visit a reception was tendered to the Hon. the Minister of

Education by the Trustees of the Public Schools, at which an address was presented to him. In his reply the Minister expressed his pleasure at listening to the exercises of the pupils, and remarked that the answers given to the various questions went to prove that the system of teaching pursued in the Ottawa schools was a sound one. He expressed himself as being especially well pleased with the geography examination. He was much pleased with the evident progressive state of the schools in Ottawa, and stated that the manifest success of the educational institutions of the city was due to the fact that trained teachers had always been engaged by the Board. The school buildings in Ottawa, he was glad to observe, were excellent, well kept, and there appeared to be an excellent feeling existing between the teachers and the pupils. He