

"The Common Schools of this Province are generally in so deplorable a state that they scarcely deserve the name of schools."

"The insufficiency of the school fund to support competent, respectable teachers has degraded common school teaching from a regular business to a mere matter of convenience to transient persons, or common idlers, who often teach school one season and leave it vacant until it accommodates some other like person, whereby the minds of our youth are left without cultivation, or, what is still worse, frequently with vulgar, low-bred, vicious, or intemperate examples before them, in the capacity of monitors," i. e., teachers.

Reports of committees of the House of Assembly in 1832, 1833 and 1835, deplore the continuance of this untoward state of things.

The Legislative Council, which had been the chief obstructive in school legislation of these days, in inviting a conference with the House of Assembly, in 1838, thus explains the reason of its rejection of a School Bill then passed by the House :

"The Legislative Council have to acquaint the House of Assembly that they cannot pass the School Bill [sent up to them] because it proposes to levy an assessment to the extent of 1½d. [3 cents] in the £ [\$4] to support Common Schools ; and as acts have lately passed imposing rates for . . . building jails and court-houses and macadamized roads, the Council fear that the assessment for common schools might be found burthensome." etc.

Thus, because jails, court-houses and roads were considered more important than schools, the last Act for the promotion of education ever passed by the U. C. House of Assembly was rejected by the Legislative Council. Such was the untoward state of affairs when the Legislative Union of Upper and Lower Canada took place in 1840.

Among the important measures passed by the first Parliament of United Canada was one providing for the establishment of a municipal system in Upper Canada, and partly so in Lower Canada. On this system was engrafted a scheme of public education, applicable to the two provinces alike, and a liberal provision was made for its maintenance. Separate Schools were then first established. After two years' trial, it was found that so diverse were the social and other conditions of the two Canadas, that the School Act of 1841 was repealed, and one adapted to each Province was passed in 1843. Separate Schools were continued.

Up to this time, Dr. Ryerson's energies had been engrossed in contending for the civil and religious rights of the people. He had also, ten years before, projected and collected money for the establishment of an academy, or college, for higher education at Cobourg. These early efforts of his, and the after establishment of Victoria College at Cobourg and Queen's College at Kingston as universities in 1840-41, aroused a wide-spread interest in education generally, which bore good fruit afterwards. Dr. Ryerson became President of Victoria University in 1841. In 1844, he was appointed Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada.