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THE SCHOOL SYSTEM OF ONTARIO.

REPORT OF THE BRITISH COMMISSIONER.

In a review of the report of the Imperial commissioner appointed to examine into the school systems of the United States and Canada, the *London Times* of the 13th ult. thus refers to the educational system of Upper Canada* :

"The Canadian system of Common Schools is, in some points, deserving of peculiar attention. It is of comparatively late origin. Its foundations were not laid until 1846, and it was after 1850 that it received its full development. In Upper Canada one portion of it was subjected to important modifications so late as last year, and in Lower Canada it is described by its chief superintendent as still in a 'nebular phase,' and has not yet worked its way into thorough acceptance. Consequently, its authors were at liberty to make use of the experience which had been acquired in the United States, England, and the Continent, and their scheme furnishes an example of an attempted combination of the merits of various systems. Moreover, when it was devised, the education of Canada had been utterly neglected, and it is an instance of an effort, and in many respects a successful one, to introduce an effective education into ignorant and rough districts. It is a bold scheme, worked with remarkable energy, and it appears to us in more than one particular superior to the systems adopted in the United States.

"The first draught of a comprehensive plan was made in 1841, designed to apply to both Upper and Lower Canada; but the circumstances of the two provinces are so different that it was soon found impossible to include them under a common

scheme, and in 1845 they were completely separated for educational purposes. Each has its own system, the two schemes being marked by a common idea, but differing widely in their details. In Upper Canada, as in the United States, the organization of the system is based upon the municipal organization of the country. The colony is divided into 42 counties, and each county into ten townships, each about ten miles square, and the township is further divided for school purposes into sections of from two to four miles square. The authorities in three divisions are the county council, the township council, and the trustees of the school section, each, of course, elective, and, in addition to these, there are four other authorities established for school purposes. First, there is a council of public instruction, appointed by the Governor, resembling both in its dignity and its functions the committee of the privy council in England. Secondly, there is a chief superintendent of education who is practically the executive officer of the council, but who possesses very considerable independent and initiative powers. Thirdly, there is a county board of public instruction, which performs for the county similar functions to those discharged for the whole province by the chief council. Lastly, the councils appoint one or more local superintendents, who act as a sort of inspectors and as executive officers for the county councils. Further, all clergymen, magistrates, and members of town and county councils are constituted school visitors, and have the right of visiting and examining at all times the schools within their districts, and of offering any advice that they may deem fitting. This office does not seem to be discharged with much readiness or efficiency, and the chief superintendent, in his annual report, makes grave complaints of the indifference displayed both by the clergy and the magistrates. The support of the schools is derived from three sources—from the whole province, from the county, and from the district. A certain sum is appropriated by the Legislature every year to common schools, and is apportioned by the chief superintendent to the several counties and townships, according to the ratio of population in each, but upon condition that the regulations of the council of public instruction are observed. Among other conditions, it is required that the county council should collect by assessment a sum of money at least equal to their share of the legislative grant. These two grants together form the common school fund, which is only applicable to the payment of teachers' salaries. It is apportioned among the various sections of the township by the local superintendent,

* Next month we hope to give some extracts from this elaborate report by the Rev. James Fraser, M.A., on our school system.