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Report of the Chief Superintendent of Public Instruction for Lower Canada for 1858.

Translated from the French by the translators to the Legislative Assembly.

Toronto, April 14th 1859.

TO THE HONORABLE PROVINCIAL SECRETARY.

Sir,—I have the honor to present to you my fourth annual report on the state of public instruction in Lower Canada.

In my two last reports I offered the suggestions which appeared to me most likely to contribute to the great end of perfecting the system of public instruction, in order that our children may stand on equal terms in this respect with their contemporaries in other countries. I insisted as strenuously as befitted me, on the urgent importance of the measures which I thought it my duty to recommend; and as it would be needless to repeat the facts and arguments which I then adduced in support of my suggestions, I shall content myself on the present occasion with stating that the experience of the year which has just terminated, has only strengthened my opinions and impelled me to renew my recommendations of the previous year.

As the scholastic year does not terminate before July, I cannot annex to this report those of the directors of the normal schools for the year commencing September 15th 1858. The reports on those institutions for the year 1857-58 were published with the report for the year 1857. I have only to state that their success, during the present year, has been perfectly uninterrupted.

The Jacques-Cartier normal school had, on the return of the classes, 50 pupils, all pupil-teachers. The department of female pupil-teachers was not yet organized. According to the statement of the accounts of that institution up to 31st December last, a balance of \$2240 remained on hand. That sum added to the savings of the present year, and its share of the increased grant recommended by me, will enable me I trust, shortly to secure to the district of Montreal advantages similar to those already enjoyed by the district of Quebec.

The McGill normal school had on the return of the classes 71 female pupil-teachers and 6 male pupil-teachers. The number of pupils in the model schools annexed to them is 300; and an infant school lately added on the plan of the *salles d'asile* has already 120. A building has been erected for this latter out of the income of the model schools. The McGill normal school had on the 31st December last a balance on hand of \$546 46.

The Laval normal school had on the return of the classes 31 pupil-teachers, and 52 female pupil-teachers. This school was on 31st December last in debt to the amount of \$3213 17, an unfortunate confirmation of my prediction of the preceding year, and sufficiently explanatory of our delay in establishing a department of female pupil-teachers at the Jacques-Cartier normal school.

An examination of the tabular statistics of the three schools will show that the business of instruction has made all desirable progress in them. We owe it to the kindness and talents of Mr. Ossaye, that the pupils of the Jacques-Cartier normal school have been enabled to follow an excellent course of lectures on rural economy delivered by that zealous agriculturist. Public lectures on general history by Mr. Desmazures of the Seminary of St. Sulpice and on French grammar and philology by M. Devisnes, an ordinary professor attached to the school, have been attended by many persons who do not belong to the institution.

The statistics of the department shew in the present year rather greater progress than that of the last, and nearly equal to that of the year 1856, a part of which was as I before observed, more apparent than real, being due chiefly to the unusual exactness with which the statistics had been kept. The following small table will shew the truth of this.

	1853.	1854.	1855.	1856.	1857.	1858.	Increase over 1857.	Increase over 1856.	Increase over 1855.	Increase over 1854.	Increase over 1853.
Institutions.....	2352	2795	2869	2919	2946	2985	39	66	116	190	633
Pupils.....	108254	119733	127058	143141	148798	155986	7183	13845	28928	36253	47702
Contributions.....	\$ 165848	236032	249136	406764	424208	459396	35188	52632	210260	221364	293548

Thus we perceive, that the increase in number of pupils, while only 6557 in 1857, has been 7183 in 1858. The entire increase in the contributions since 1856 has been \$52,632, a considerable difference, shewing unvarying progress.

I should add that the arrears remaining unpaid of the assessments shew a gradual decrease every year; and that the Inspectors (well supported by the department) constantly strive to secure the payment of them, and with much success.

The following table of the number of pupils studying the several most important branches of primary instruction shews results still more striking than those of former years. The increase of 5271 in book-keeping, being nearly 100 per cent, of 16169 in history, and of 6669 in grammatical parsing claims particular notice.

The census of children between five and sixteen years of age shews the number to be 247,204; this being considered with reference to other information in my hands, appears as in former years, to fall short of the reality. A better approximation, I am justified in believing would be \$20,000. The number of children who attend the schools within their respective municipalities (ex-

cluding therefore a large number of those who attend superior institutions, and all children under five years of age, whom particular information shews to be more numerous than I formerly believed) is shown to be 134,579.

The number of children between seven and fourteen (the limits fixed by law as those within which attendance at the common schools is compulsory) is set down as 157,819, of whom 102,963 attend the schools, being nearly two-thirds, and far exceeding the proportion of former years.

Table B in the appendix, containing a statement of the contributions voluntary or involuntary for the year shews, as I before said, a very remarkable increase. This I shall examine in its details, and it is proper to remark that the table does not comprehend the payments made to the superior institutions for board or tuition. The assessments levied over and above the compulsory contributions, and the special assessments, exclusive of those made for the erection or repairs of school-houses, amount to \$88,372, an increase of \$9,534 over the amount of the preceding year. The sums levied for the erection and repairs of school-houses, which in 1857