

Schools, and should be faithfully acted upon by every person filling that important office, thus making it equally confided in by all classes of the community. I am sure every Municipal Council in Upper Canada will agree with me, that the entire superintendence of the School system, in all its parts and applications, should be perfectly free from the spirit or tinge of political partizanship—that its influence, like the genial light and warmth of the sun, should be employed for the equal benefit of all without regard to party, sect, or colour.

It will, of course, be a matter of discretionary consideration with each County Council, as to whether it will leave any or all the Township Superintendents in office during the remainder of the current year, before re-appointing or changing them. If not re-appointed or changed, the present local Superintendents will, of course, (as provided by the first Section of the Act) be paid for the current year by the Council appointing them, and according to its agreement with them. But they must henceforth perform their duties according to the provisions of the new School Act,—the basis and authority for all Common School proceedings of every description. In all cases where the superintendence of Schools in any Township has not been provided for the current year, it will be necessary for the County Council to supply that essential instrumentality in the payment of the School moneys and the supervision of the Schools.

4. In respect to the exercise of other powers with which the Act invests the County Council, I do not think it necessary to make more than one or two remarks. I trust that by the commencement of next year, provisions will be made for the establishment of School libraries, when the County Council will be able to judge as to the mode in which it can best employ its legal power for the introduction and diffusion of that most potent element of high civilization. The County Council is, of course, the best judge whether and to what extent it may be desirable and expedient to make provision "to give special or additional aid to new or needy School Sections, on the recommendation of one or more local Superintendents." It will be important that the County Council see that all balances of School moneys yet unexpended and in the hands of any local Superintendent, and all Township Assessments for raising part of the current year's School fund, be paid into the hands of the County Treasurer or Sub-treasurer, and expended and accounted for in the manner prescribed by the Act.

5. The spirit in which the provisions of the new School Act have been, generally speaking, discussed and adopted in the Legislature, I regard as an omen for the good of our country, and worthy of imitation in all Municipal and Local School proceedings throughout Upper Canada. Party differences were not permitted to mar this great measure for the education of the people; and although there were individual differences of opinion among men of different parties as to some details of the Bill, yet men of all parties united in the support of its general principles, and in an earnest desire and effort to render it as perfect as possible in all its provisions. I hope that no party spirit will be permitted to impair the efficiency of its administration in any Municipal Council, public meeting or Corporation. In the great work of providing for the education of the young, let partizanship and sectarianism be forgotten; and all acting as christians and patriots, let us each endeavour to leave our country better than we found it, and stamp upon the whole rising and coming generations of Canada, the principles and spirit of an active, a practical, a generous, and christian intelligence.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

E. RYERSON.

To the Warden of the — of —.

[CIRCULAR.]

[OFFICIAL.]

To the Mayors of Cities and Towns in Upper Canada, on the Duties of City and Town Councils under the new Common School Act, 13th and 14th Victoria, Chapter 48.

EDUCATION OFFICE,
Toronto, August 12th, 1850.

SIR,—In transmitting to you a copy of the new Common School Act for Upper Canada, I wish to call the attention of the Council over which you have been elected to preside, to its principal provisions relative to Cities and Towns. These provisions are contained in Sections 21, 22, 23, 24, and 47.

By the first section of the Act, you will perceive that all the elections, appointments, contracts, assessments, &c., which have taken place in your Municipality are confirmed until fulfilled or superseded according to the provisions of the same. By the 47th section, you will observe that an election of a new Board of Trustees is provided for in your Municipality the first Tuesday in September next, and that you are authorized and required to give due notices for the holding of such election.

From the twenty-first and three following sections of the Act, it will be seen, that there is to be but one Board of School Trustees for each City or Town, as there has been since 1847; but that the Board of Trustees is to be elected by taxable inhabitants, instead of being appointed, as heretofore, by the Corporation. It is at variance with a fundamental principle of representative government, to invest a Board of Trustees who are not elected representatives of any constituency, with discretionary power to raise or cause money to be raised for School purposes; it has been found that without such power, their office is quite inadequate to accomplish the objects for which it has been created. There is also reason to believe that, as a general rule, persons who are formally elected by the suffrages of their fellow-citizens at large for the special object of representing and promoting their educational interests, will be more likely to attend to those interests with greater energy and zeal than the nominees of any Corporation—although much (and in some instances immense) good has been done during the last three years by Boards of Trustees appointed by the Corporations of the several Cities and Towns in Upper Canada. Under the provisions of the new School Act, the School Trustees of each City and Town are to be elected by a larger suffrage than the members of the municipal Council, and being the representatives of their fellow-citizens for School purposes, have the management of all the Common School affairs of the City or Town, and determine the sum or sums of money to be raised for Common School purposes, and the manner in which such sum or sums of money shall be provided. But as the whole apparatus of agency for levying and collecting property assessments, has already been created, and is in the hands of the municipal Council, it would be superfluous and bad economy to create a new municipal authority and a new agency of officers, &c., for levying and collecting assessments for School purposes. To do this, therefore, devolves upon the municipal Council, whose duty in this respect is strictly ministerial.

This is the system which has been established with so much success in the principal Cities and Towns of the neighbouring States, from which we have adopted so much of our general Common School system. In the City of New-York, for example, the Board of Education (called with us Board of Trustees) the members of which are elected in the several wards of the City, as is provided in the new School Act with us, determines the sum or sums of money necessary for every Common School purpose, and the municipal authorities are required by law to provide the sum or sums thus determined from time to time by the School representatives of the people. And in behalf of no object is there such unanimous and cordial willingness among all classes and parties to contribute liberally, as for the education of the young.

In my Circular, dated the 15th January, 1848, addressed to Heads of City and Town Corporations, I explained at large the system of Schools required to supply the educational wants of Cities and Towns, and for which provision is made by establishing one general Board of Trustees with proper powers, for all the Schools in each City and Town. The expositions referred to, need not be repeated in this place; but after the election of the new Boards of Trustees for Cities and Towns, I shall deem it my duty to address them on the nature of their duties and responsibilities under the provisions of the present School Act; an Act which I trust is destined to confer great and lasting benefits upon the Cities, Towns, and Villages, as well as Counties and Townships, of Upper Canada.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

E. RYERSON.

To His — the Mayor of the — of —.