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Circular to Local Superintendents of Common Schools in Upper Canada, transmitting blank forms of Reports, &c., and directing their attention to several matters.

SIR,

I transmit to you by mail herewith the blank Reports for the Trustees of the Schools under your charge, and for yourself, for the current year, 1851. You will please furnish a copy of these blank Reports to each Corporation of School Trustees within your jurisdiction. It is important that the Trustees should have those blank Reports in good time to enable them to fill them correctly and fully before the ensuing Annual School Meetings, (to be held on the second Wednesday in January next,) at which the Trustees are required to read them to their constituents, and then to transmit them forthwith to you. In each blank Report, there are plain and minute directions to Trustees as to the manner of filling up the various columns which it contains. Numerous complaints reached this Department from Trustees last year, to the effect that they had not been furnished by their local Superintendent with a copy of the blank School Report. I hope you will see that there is no ground this year for such a complaint from the Trustees of any school under your supervision. I have forwarded you these blank Reports direct by mail, instead of by stage through the County Clerk, in order that you may have ample time to secure the delivery of them to each of the parties concerned before the 25th of this month.

2. I also forward to the Clerk of your County one copy of my Annual School Report for 1850 for yourself, and one copy for each of the School Trustee Corporations within your jurisdiction. To the address on each Report for the Trustees you will please be particular to add the number and Township of the School Section, in a blank left for that purpose, and cause the Report to be delivered to each of the Trustee Corporations for which it is intended. This Report occupies nearly 400 royal octavo pages; and besides a large amount of statistical information, it contains a copy of the School Act, forms, regulations, and a great variety of documents, which will render it a comprehensive School Manual for Trustees and all other parties concerned in the administration of the School system. To aid you still further in the preparation of School Lectures, and in deciding doubtful questions, I transmit to the County Clerk for your use a copy of the three bound volumes of the *Journal of Education*. Besides a great variety of educational articles, and educational intelligence generally, nearly every question of dispute arising under the operation of the School law, has been discussed in the *Journal of Education*, and may be referred to by means of the Index prefixed to each volume; and the disputed questions not referred to in the first three volumes of the *Journal*, are discussed in the fourth volume (not yet completed), and in the Appendix to my Annual Report. It will be observed that all copies of School Reports, Acts, &c., thus provided for local Superintendents and Trustees are not the property of individuals, but of SCHOOL OFFICERS AND CORPORATIONS, and appertain to the Offices and Corporations by whomsoever filled, either now or hereafter. It is important that every School Trustee, and I may say every school elector, should understand the school law, and the principles and character of the school system; and I have done what I could to promote this object by issuing the *Journal of Education*, and by the circulation of *Annual School Reports*. It is one of the gratifying indications of progress, that the liberality of the Legislature has enabled me, during the last and the present year, to furnish each Municipal Council, School Superintendent, and School Corporation in Upper Canada, with a copy of the Provincial Annual School Report—a Report which I have endeavoured to render as complete and as instructive as possible.

3. To the filling and adding up of the columns of your own blank School Report for the current year, and to its early transmission to this Department, I must solicit your special attention and care. To the printed directions accompanying the blank Report, I need only add a few words on filling up the columns relative to the *average school attendance of pupils*. The strictest accuracy and uniformity in determining this, is the more important as the present Act provides, (not indeed, as some have supposed for the apportionment of the Legislative School Grant to Counties and Townships, but) for the distribution of the School Fund to the several School Sections in a Township, according to the *average attendance of pupils at school in each section*—the mean attendance of winter and summer being taken. I need not enlarge on this principle of the law which proposes to aid each School Section, not according to the number of children of school age, nor according to the amount of taxable property, nor according to what the inhabitants in each School Section may contribute, but according to the number of children sent to school, and the time and punctuality of their attendance—conditions favorable to poorer sections. Such being the principle of the law in respect to the local distribution of the School Fund, care should be taken that no errors or attempted abuses escape detection in the returns of the average attendance of pupils. This you can easily prevent. The law requires each local Superintendent at his quarterly visit to each school, to ascertain, among other things, the average attendance of pupils. Your own quarterly notes, therefore, of the average attendance of pupils at each school will enable you to test the accuracy of each school report on this point.* Where any change has been made in the municipal boundaries of your Township, care should be taken to distinguish the new divisions in your report. See *Journal of Education* for September 1851, page 138.

4. With a view of aiding in furnishing schools with proper maps and apparatus, as well as text books, I have forwarded to the Clerk of your County, for the information of the members of the Council, local Superintendents, and all other school officers, specimens of maps, historical and natural history prints, &c., &c., to the amount of several pounds. The last sixteen pages of the appendix to my Annual Report are occupied with a descriptive catalogue of a great variety of school publications of this kind, which I have arranged to procure for schools at cost prices. I have also procured samples of the latest and most improved kind of school-house furniture, which, I am inclined to believe, can be manufactured here for schools, cheaper than it can be imported from the United States. Having also selected, and made arrangements for procuring a supply of some 2,000 volumes of books for public School Libraries, this last branch of the school system will, in the course of a few months, be completed, and a list of the books, with the prices, will be published in the *Journal of Education* for the information of the Municipalities and the various school authorities.

5. In conclusion, I would call your attention to that clause of the School Act, (section 12, clause 15,) which makes it the duty of each School Corporation "to procure, annually, for the benefit of the School Section, *some periodical devoted to education*." This is to be done not at the expense of the Trustees, but at the expense of the School Section for whose benefit the periodical is procured, and, should be included as one of the items of expense for which the Trustees make provision in levying the school rates. The benefit of such a periodical, from any country, in a School Section, even if read by no more than one or two of the Trustees and the Teacher, would many times over-balance the one dollar paid for it. I have reason to believe that this provision of the Act has been but partially carried into effect. This ought not so to be. Every School Corporation ought to have a school periodical. During four years I have, without a farthing's remuneration, at some expense of means and much labour, voluntarily conducted and caused to be published a monthly *Journal of Education*, containing that kind of information which appeared most appropriate to School Trustees and other persons concerned in the administration and success of the school system throughout Upper Canada. In addition to the usual topics discussed and intelligence given in the *Journal of Education*, the next volume will contain the regulations for the establishment of Libraries, and catalogues and characteristic notices of the books

* This subject is more fully discussed and explained in my two circulars to local Superintendents, dated respectively the 12th of August, 1850, and the 28th of June, 1851. See my Annual School Report for 1850, Appendix VI., Numbers 4 and 12,—pages 260-275, and 298-300.