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Papers on Grammar Schools in Upper Canada.

I. CIRCULAR TO THE CHAIRMEN OF THE BOARD OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL TRUSTEES.

SIR,—The 6th section of the Grammar School Improvement Act of 1865, enacts, that—

“6. No Grammar School shall be entitled to share in the Grammar School Fund, unless a sum shall be provided, from local sources, exclusive of fees, equal at least to half the sum apportioned to such school, and expended for the same purpose as the said fund.”

In a Circular addressed to the Boards of Grammar School Trustees, in December last, the following paragraph occurs:—

“Relying upon the liberal co-operation of the county, city, town, and village municipalities, and to facilitate, as far as possible, the labours of the trustees, I will make and pay the next year's apportionment of the Grammar School fund, in aid of the Grammar Schools which are conducted according to law, without waiting for the proportionate sums required by law to be provided from local sources; but if these sums, in any instances, are not provided in the course of the year, it will then be my duty to withhold, in all such cases, the payment of any further sums from the school fund, until the deficiency is made up.”

Notice was, at the same time, given of the following Regulation, adopted by the Council of Public Instruction, and approved by his Excellency the Governor-General:—

“2. After the first day of January, 1866, no Grammar School shall be entitled to receive any thing from the Grammar School Fund, unless suitable accommodations shall be provided for it, and unless it shall have a daily average attendance (times of epidemic excepted) of at least ten pupils learning Greek or Latin; nor shall any other than pupils who have passed the

preliminary and final entrance examinations, and are pursuing the yearly subjects of one of the two courses of studies prescribed in the Programme, be admitted or continued in any Grammar School.”

It seems just and desirable that ample time should be afforded for a compliance with the law, as above quoted and explained, and that the trustees and municipal authorities should be informed, at the earliest possible period, of the minimum amount to be raised within the year for the purpose in question. It has, therefore, been determined to make the apportionment for the current year on the basis of the work done by the Grammar Schools in 1865.

The following is the section of the Grammar School Improvement Act, which regulates the apportionment:—

“7. The apportionment payable half yearly to the Grammar Schools, shall be made to each school conducted according to law, upon the basis of the daily average attendance at such Grammar School of pupils in the programme of studies prescribed according to law for Grammar Schools; such attendance shall be certified by the head master and trustees, and verified by the Inspector of Grammar Schools.”

As the trustees have already been reminded, by the Circular above quoted, under the provisions of the new Act there is no apportionment to counties according to population, nor any distinction between senior and junior Grammar Schools.

In bringing this new principle of distribution into practice for the first time, the letter of the law would require large and sudden reductions in the grants to some of the schools (especially the senior schools), as compared with those of the past year or two; but, where that has been the case, I have sought to render the operation of this provision of the law as favorable as possible to the schools and individuals concerned, for the present year.

The grant to your school, for 1866, will be at the rate of per annum, for the period during which it is kept open, with the required average attendance, and conducted according to law; and the smallest sum required to be raised under the 6th section above quoted, within the year, is

It is hoped and expected that, in the course of the year, the system of local municipal support will be so generally adopted and matured as to largely increase the means for the support of Grammar Schools and their Masters. It must be remembered that, in a complete system of public education, the Grammar Schools are only second, if second at all, in importance, to the Common Schools themselves.

Circulars explaining the provisions of the law were sent to the Wardens of Counties, the Mayors of Cities and Towns, and the Reeves of Villages, in November and December last, and a sufficient number of copies of the present circular are sent to you, to enable the trustees, if necessary, to bring the matter again under the notice of the municipal bodies.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

E. RYERSON.