

soundly berated the Board of Trustees for squandering public money on such an institution, and so confident were they of its non-success that they had partially completed arrangements for purchasing the building and site and using it for other purposes. However, they were destined to disappointment, for instead of failure every effort was crowned with success.

Another element that stands out prominently and should not be overlooked is that in this school is to be found the embodiment of the progressive spirit which actuated many of the leading citizens of Hamilton during the time when it fairly earned the title of the "Ambitious City." This is the first representative institution in the Province of a properly graded common school, in which were separate rooms, separate teachers and separate classes, presided over by a competent principal, who directed the energies of pupils and teachers along well defined lines. These advanced ideas came into direct conflict with the conservatism of the old teachers, and the first exhibition of their strength took place in this city. Here was a concrete example of what was meant by a proper classification of pupils, a systematic grading of classes, and the introduction of the most approved methods of instruction. The victory was won by the progressive party, and from that time to the present the inspiration then given has placed Hamilton in the foremost rank of the most advanced educational centres of this Province.

But to enter into the spirit of this progressive movement, and to appreciate all that this Central School meant to Hamilton, and to the system of common schools recently introduced by Dr. Ryerson, Chief Superintendent of Education, it will be necessary to trace briefly the rise and progress of popular education throughout this Province from the earliest times to the opening of this school.

Owing to the sparseness of the population and the poverty of the majority of the people in those early days, only a few private schools were opened. Kingston has