

This table, compiled from the Official Records of the Educational Department, exhibits in clear and unmistakeable light the satisfactory progress which Upper Canada has made in the great work of public instruction and enlightenment.

It proves, that, while the school population has increased at the rate of about 10,000 per annum since 1841 (doubling itself in 13 years), the pupils at the Common Schools have increased at the rate of nearly 12,000 per annum, (thus trebling the attendance during the same period); that out of a school population of 269,000 in 1853, 195,000 were attending school; and out of a school population of 278,000 in 1854, 204,000 were attending school during one period of the year or other; that Free Schools have been multiplied; that the sums available for the salaries of teachers, and for the purchase of maps, libraries and apparatus, have been augmented at the rate of £30,000 per annum; that the character and style of the school-houses, and their architecture, are greatly improved from year to year; and that in all those material elements of educational prosperity, which are the true tests of intellectual progress, Upper Canada has not only much cause for congratulation, but that she has the strongest reason for an increased determination to guard sacredly and intact a system of education capable of conferring so many advantages upon the country.

It may be proper to remark here, that, although the Annual Reports of the Chief Superintendent exhibit a continuous and satisfactory progress of the Common School system, these reports have also exhibited its lights and shades, its failures and its successes; and have pointed out with distinctness and emphasis the sources of weakness, the evils to be guarded against, and the points susceptible of improvement. The statistical tables of these reports have been especially compiled to enable the Legislature and the public to test by the severest scrutiny every alleged success, and to analyse most critically the causes of any apparent failure. They enter minutely into every feature of the school system—its finances—the attendance of pupils—modes of teaching—branches of instruction—books used—qualification of teachers—condition of school premises—official duties of Local Superintendents and school visitors—maps and apparatus, and all other items of information which are necessary to any satisfactory inquiry into the working of a system of public instruction. An annual series of reports so constructed will be invaluable as a guide in future legislation on this important subject, besides furnishing ample materials to the historian for an accurate survey of our educational state and progress.

To render the system of national education in Upper Canada as effective as possible, the following points, among others, were deemed essential:

1. That the system itself should be based upon Christian principles.
2. That it should provide for municipal control and co-operation; and for local management and oversight.
3. That it should embrace a gradation of schools—primary, intermediate, and superior—(or the grammar schools.)
4. That Departmental control should be advisory, impartial and uniform; in some respects judicial (in so far as such questions involve the due expenditure of, and the careful accounting for, all such money so expended); that the Department should prescribe the general regulations, and provide facilities for improving the condition of the schools, furnishing

them with superior teachers, with libraries, maps, apparatus, and text-books; and that it should annually collect and embody in a general report the grand result of the united labours of all persons engaged in this real work, for the information of the public and the guidance of the Legislature.

The expediency of a comprehensive system of National Education, founded upon these principles, controlled by our Legislature and directed by an intelligent and responsible officer, had long been felt and admitted by every one. And such a system has been established in Canada by the unanimous and deliberate voice of her Legislature and people; and that system has now become one of the great institutions of the Province. It is interwoven into the very network of society. It is, as provided by law, controlled and sustained by every municipality of the Province. It is essential to our very existence as an intelligent people, and to the existence of our civil and religious rights and privileges. It is, therefore, a subject which cannot with safety be rudely or capriciously dealt with. As a National system its unity and completeness cannot be broken or imperilled at random. If any departure from the great and settled principles, upon which it is wisely founded, be expedient, that departure can only be justified by the direst necessity, and should not be made in a partizan and de-national spirit. To mar its proportions or to wound and pierce its vitals is not a proceeding which should excite a feeling of satisfaction or be regarded as a party triumph. The cause is too sacred.

To maintain the Public School System of Upper Canada in its integrity, and to render it still more efficient, have ever been prominent objects with the Educational Department. Every effort has been made to improve, extend and consolidate that system; the facilities enjoyed by the department for acquiring information in regard to the school legislation, and experience and systems in other countries, have been unceasingly employed for the improvement of our own; and even now the active labours of the Chief Superintendent, while in Europe, are directed not only to the adoption of measures for perfecting the details of our school system, and for providing additional facilities for the purposes of instruction in the schools, but also to the establishment of an Educational Museum which, as a higher instrument or means of instruction, will be unequalled on this Continent.

On the other hand, the unanimity with which the different municipalities of Upper Canada continue to sustain the educational system, is in the highest degree satisfactory and animating. It proves how sure is the hold which that system has acquired upon the feelings and affections of the people. The desire to obtain good teachers is evidenced by the unusual number of applications which is constantly being made at the Normal School for trained teachers. The supply does not equal the demand, although, hitherto, it was considered ample. The voluntary contribution, during 1853-5, of about \$10,000 per annum, for the Public School Libraries, in addition to the ordinary expenditure, was a noble indication of the determination of the people of Upper Canada to avail themselves of the store-houses of knowledge which heretofore have been available only to a privileged few. The extraordinary demand for maps, apparatus, and school requisites which is continually being made upon the Educational Department, prove how sincere are the efforts of the Trustees and rate-payers to elevate the character of the schools, and to increase the facilities of instruction to the utmost extent. Add to this the fact, that not less than \$500,000 are also annually contributed *from local sources* alone