

The council of public instruction in the discharge of the responsibility thus imposed upon it, has adopted, among the general regulations for the establishment and management of public school libraries in Upper Canada, the following rule:—  
 "In order to prevent the introduction of improper books into libraries, it is required that no books shall be admitted into any public school library established under these regulations, which is not included in the catalogue of public school library books prepared according to law;" and the principles by which it has been guided in performing the task of selecting books for these libraries, are stated in the following extract from the minutes of its proceedings:

"1. The council regards it as imperative that no work of a licentious, vicious, or immoral tendency, and no works hostile to the Christian religion should be admitted into the libraries.

"2. Nor is it in the opinion of the council compatible with the objects of the public school libraries, to introduce into them controversial works on theology, or works of denominational controversy; although it would not be desirable to exclude all historical and other works in which such topics are referred to and discussed, and it is desirable to include a selection of suitable works on the evidences of natural and revealed religion.

"3. In regard to works on ecclesiastical history, the council agree on a selection of the most approved works on each side.

"4. With these exceptions and within these limitations, it is the opinion of the council that as wide a selection as possible should be made of useful and entertaining books of permanent value, adapted to popular reading in the various departments of human knowledge; leaving each municipality to consult its own taste, and exercise its own discretion in selecting such books from the general catalogue.

"5. The including of any books in the general catalogue is not to be understood as the expression of any opinion by the council in regard to any sentiments inculcated or combated in such books; but merely as an acquiescence on the part of the council in the purchase of such by any municipality, should it think proper to do so.

"6. The general catalogue of books for public school libraries, may be modified and enlarged from year to year as circumstances may suggest, and as suitable new works of value may appear."

The catalogue above referred to, and of which I enclose a copy, affords ample proof of the intelligence and liberal spirit in which the principles above stated have been carried out by the council of public instruction. The chief superintendent observes, that in the case of the libraries established up to the present time, the local authorities have in a large number of instances assigned the task of selecting books to the chief superintendent; that in some they have by a committee of one or more of themselves, chosen all the books desired by them, and that in others they have selected them to the amount of their own appropriation, requesting the chief superintendent to choose the remainder to the amount of the apportionment of the library grant. The chief superintendent recommends the last as a preferable mode. The total number of volumes issued from the educational department to public libraries in Upper Canada from November 1853, when the issue commenced, to the end of August last, was 62,866.

The system of public instruction in Upper Canada is ingrafted upon the municipal institutions of the province, to which an organization very complete in its details, and admirably adapted to develop the resources, confirm the credit, and promote the moral and social interests of a young country, was imparted by an act passed in 1849. The law by which the common schools are regulated was enacted in 1850, and it embraces all the modifications and improvements suggested by experience in the provisions of the several school acts passed subsequently to 1841, when the important principle of granting money to each county, on condition that an equal amount were raised within it by local assessment, was first introduced into the statute book.

The development of individual self-reliance and local exertion, under the superintendence of a central authority exercising an

influence almost exclusively moral, is the ruling principle of the system. Accordingly, it rests with the freeholders and householders of each school section to decide whether they will support their school by voluntary subscription, by rate bill for each pupil attending the school (which must not, however, exceed one shilling per month), or by rates on property. The trustees elected by the same freeholders and householders are required to determine the amount to be raised within their respective school sections for all school purposes whatsoever, to hire teachers from among persons holding legal certificates of qualification, and to agree with them as to salary. On the local superintendents appointed by the county councils is devolved the duty of apportioning the legislative grant among the school sections within the county, of inspecting the schools, and reporting upon them to the chief superintendent. The county boards of public instruction, composed of the local superintendent or superintendents and the trustees of the county grammar school, examine candidates for the office of teacher, and give certificates of qualification, which are valid for the county; the chief superintendent giving certificates to normal school pupils, which are valid for the province; while the chief superintendent, who holds his appointment from the Crown, aided, in specified cases, by the council of public instruction, has under his especial charge the normal and the model schools, besides exercising a general control over the whole system,—duties most efficiently performed by the able head of the department, Dr. Ryerson, to whom the inhabitants of Upper Canada are mainly indebted for the system of public instruction which is now in such successful operation among them.

The question of religious instruction, as connected with the common school system, presented even more than ordinary difficulty in a community where there is so much diversity of public opinion on religious subjects, and where all denominations are in the eye of the law, on a footing of entire equality. It is laid down as a fundamental principle that, as the common schools are not boarding but day schools, and as the pupils are under the care of their parents and guardians during the Sunday and a considerable portion of each week-day, it is not intended that the functions of the common school teacher should supersede those of the parent and pastor of the child. Accordingly, the law contents itself with providing on this head, "that in any model or common school established under this act, no child shall be required to read or study in or from any religious book, or to join in any exercise of devotion or religion which shall be objected to by his or her parents or guardians. Provided always, that within this limitation pupils shall be allowed to receive such religious instruction as their parents or guardians shall desire, according to general regulations which shall be provided according to law;" and it authorizes, under certain regulations, the establishment of a separate school for Protestants or Roman Catholics, as the case may be, when the teacher of the common school is of the opposite persuasion.

The council of public instruction urges the inculcation of the principles of religion and morality upon all the pupils in the schools and prescribes the following regulation upon the subject:—"The public religious exercises of each school shall be a matter of mutual voluntary arrangement between the trustees and the teacher, and it shall be a matter of mutual voluntary arrangement between the teacher and the parent and the parent and guardian of each pupil, as to whether he shall hear such pupil recite from the scripture or catechism, or other summary of religious doctrine and duty of the persuasion of such parent or guardian. Such recitations, however, are not to interfere with the regular exercises of the school."

As a further security that these principles will be adhered to, clergymen recognized by law, of whatever denomination, are made ex-officio visitors of the schools in townships, cities, towns, or villages, where they reside, or have pastoral charge; and the chief superintendent remarks on this head, "The clergy of the country have access to each of its schools, and we know of no instance in which the school has been made the place of religious discord, but many instances, especially on