

western side of the Atlantic, in providing for Normal School instruction, and in aiding teachers to avail themselves of its advantages. The third is, that the people of Upper Canada have, during the last year, voluntarily taxed themselves for the salaries of Teachers in a larger sum, in proportion to their numbers, and have kept open their schools, on an average, more months, than the neighbouring citizens of the old and great State of New York. The fourth is, that the essential requisite of a series of suitable and excellent text-books has been introduced into our schools, and adopted almost by general acclamation, and that the facilities of furnishing all our schools with the necessary books, maps and apparatus, will soon be in advance of those of any other country. I confidently hope, therefore, by the Divine blessing, that many assembled on the present important occasion, will live to see Canada compare as advantageously with other portions of America in the Christian education and general intelligence of her people as she now does in the specimens of her latent resources and productive industry and enterprise at the World's Exhibition in London.

Dr. RYERSON'S Address having been handed to the Governor General, His EXCELLENCY replied as follows :—

Rev. Dr. Ryerson, I thank you, sir, for the very courteous reference to my attendance upon this occasion, which you have introduced into the address which you have just now read. I come here, sir, to-day, in the discharge of what is to me a most agreeable duty, and I beg, sir, to say that the gratification which I experience in the discharge of that duty is greatly enhanced by the very gratifying and interesting account of the progress and prospects of Common School Education in Upper Canada which you have had it in your power to furnish.

I certainly think that no government, which is conscious of its own responsibilities, can possibly feel indifferent to an Institution such as that of which we are now about to lay the foundation stone; an Institution which promises, under God's blessing, to exercise so material an influence in the formation of the mind and character of the rising generation of the Province, and, through that powerful instrumentality, upon its destinies and its future; an Institution, too, allow me to remark, which we must not regard as a novelty or an experiment, but one which has already—and on this point I may speak in some measure from my own experience, for I have had opportunities of observing the skill of the masters and the proficiency of the pupils in the Normal School—established its claims to the confidence of the people of the Province. Although, therefore, sir, I am of opinion that there are limits—and pretty narrow limits, too—beyond which the interference of government in matters of education cannot be carried without hazard to those great interests which it is its desire to foster and to protect; I think that an Institution such as this has special claims upon its countenance and support, and that I am, therefore, not transcending those limits, but on the contrary, that I am confining myself strictly within them, when I consent to take the prominent part in the ceremonial of this day which has been assigned to me.

Sir, I observe that in the early part of this address you remark that, "the special education of teachers is an essential element in the systems of public instruction of all countries in which the general education of the people is regarded as a matter of national importance; and that experience has shown the necessity and advantage of a preparatory course of instruction and practice for the profession of teaching, as well as for the other professions and trades which are demanded by the necessities of every civilized community." Sir, nothing can be more unquestionably true than these sentiments. But perhaps I may be permitted to observe that their truth has not been at all times recognized. It has often appeared to me that within the whole range of human experience, it would be difficult to point out a more flagrant—a more instructive—instance of the error of putting the effect before the cause, than was exhibited in the course pursued by the friends of education in England and other countries, who, for a series of years, busied themselves in building schools, and endeavouring to induce children to attend those schools, without ever inquiring whether competent persons to conduct them could be procured, and without taking any efficient and vigorous steps to supply the admitted want of competent teachers. Sir, it appears to me that in this instance, as in many others—this young country has had the advantage of profiting by the experience of older countries—by their failures and disappoint-

ments, as well as by their successes; and that experience, improved by your diligent exertions and excellent judgment, [for I should neither satisfy my own feelings nor the claims of justice, if I were not on this occasion to express my high sense of the ability and the zeal with which you have conducted the important department which has been committed to your care.] I say, that experience, so improved and fortified by the support of the Council of Education, the Government and the Parliament of the Province, has enabled Upper Canada to place itself [as you justly observed in your address,] in the van among the nations in the great and important work of providing an efficient system of general education for the whole community. And now let me ask this intelligent audience, who have so kindly listened to me up to this moment—let me ask them to consider in all seriousness and earnestness what that great work really is. I do not think that I shall be chargeable with exaggeration when I affirm that it is *the* work of our day and generation—that it is *the* problem in our modern society which is most difficult of solution—that it is the ground upon which earnest and zealous men unhappily too often, and in many countries meet, not to co-operate but to wrangle; while the poor and the ignorant multitudes around them are starving and perishing for lack of knowledge. [Hear.] Well, then, how has Upper Canada addressed herself to the execution of this great work? How has she sought to solve this problem—to overcome this difficulty? Sir, I understand from your statements—and I come to the same conclusion from my own investigation and observation—that it is the principle of our Common School Educational system, that its foundation is laid deep in the firm rock of our common Christianity. I understand, sir, that while the varying views and opinions of a mixed religious society are scrupulously respected—while every semblance of dictation is carefully avoided—it is desired, it is earnestly recommended, it is confidently expected and hoped, that every child who attends our Common Schools, shall learn there that he is a being who has an interest in eternity as well as in time—[applause;]—that he has a Father, towards whom he stands in a closer and more affecting, and more endearing relationship than to any earthly father, and that Father is in heaven [applause]; that he has a hope, far transcending every earthly hope—a hope full of immortality—the hope, namely, that that Father's kingdom may come; that he has a duty which, like the sun in our celestial system, stands in the centre of his moral obligations, shedding upon them a hallowing light which they in their turn reflect and absorb,—the duty of striving to prove by his life and conversation the sincerity of his prayer, that that Father's will may be done upon earth as it is done in heaven. [Applause]. I understand, sir, that upon the broad and solid platform which is raised upon that good foundation, we invite the ministers of religion, of all denominations—the *de facto* spiritual guides of the people of the country—to take their stand along with us. That, so far from hampering or impeding them in the exercise of their sacred functions, we ask and we beg them to take the children—the lambs of the flock which are committed to their care—aside, and to lead them to those pastures and streams where they will find, as they believe it, the food of life and the waters of consolation. [Applause].

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is not the fitting or proper time to enter into details. Indeed, I have not voice or strength to enter now at any length into the details of the excellent system of secular education which is provided in our Common Schools. When, however, you tell us, sir, that an increasing supply is going forth, from year to year, from this Normal School, of well qualified Teachers—that you have procured in abundance, excellent, well selected, and cheap text books—that libraries in connection with the Common Schools, are being multiplied all over the country—and, above all, that the zeal of the people themselves in the cause of education, is evinced by the augmented taxation, self-imposed for the promotion of that great object; when you tell us all this, I feel that little is wanting to fulfil the desires of the most ardent philanthropist and lover of education; I feel that if these influences are left to operate freely—if no untoward causes arise to disturb them—they must eventually leaven the whole mass of our society. [Applause.] Permit me, then, without detaining you any further from what is the special business of the day—permit me in conclusion, to say, both as an humble Christian man, and as the head of the Civil Government of the Province, that it gives me unfeigned pleasure to perceive that the youth of this country, of all denominations, who are destined in their maturer years to meet in the discharge of the