

tional powers and facilities for the discharge of their important and often difficult duties.

1. By law all your schools are made *free schools*, and as such supported entirely by rates on taxable property. The great object desired so frequently and with so much unanimity by County School Conventions, and by the friends of educational progress generally, is thus accomplished, and the agitations which have taken place on the subject during the last twenty years, will now cease, though they have prepared the way for this grand consummation of a *free school law*.

2. While the law thus makes every man in proportion to his property, which is protected and increased in value by the labour of all, liable for the education of every child in the land, it also provides that every child shall have the right of at least four months school instruction each year from seven to twelve years of age—that is six years; and invests Trustees with power to see that no parent or guardian shall wilfully, without penalty, violate this beneficent provision of the law, and of which every rate-payer has a right to claim the execution.

3. Then follows the corresponding necessary provision, that 'each School Corporation shall provide *adequate school accommodations* for all children of school age in their school division or municipality.' These 'adequate accommodations' include two things:—*First*. Protection of the pupils from snow and cold in winter, and from rain in spring, summer and autumn. *Secondly*, sufficient room, seats, desks, and necessary outside conveniences for the pupils. In default of this, the payment of the school apportionment may be withheld, and the defaulting Trustees made personally responsible for the loss of the amount thus forfeited and lost to the school section through their neglect; and any parent may sue the Trustees for damages in not providing 'adequate accommodations' for the due reception and teaching of his child.

4. Then follows also the obligation of Trustees to employ a competent teacher. If the property of every man is taxed in proportion to its value to support a Public School, every man has a just right to claim the teaching of his children all the subjects of the Public School education. The first clause of the eighty-first section of the Consolidated School Act explicitly requires that, "It shall be the duty of every teacher of a Common School to teach diligently and faithfully *all the subjects required to be taught in the school*;" and therefore a teacher must be employed competent to teach those subjects, as far as the children of each ratepayer may require. It would be a monstrous injustice to tax a man to defray all the expenses of a school, and then that his children could not be taught in such school the prescribed Public School subjects, on account of a teacher being employed less advanced than some of his own children. The object of the Free School law is not to save the pockets of certain parties, but to make the school as *fit* to teach, as it is free, to all classes of children of school age, by making the property of all liable for its support, and empowering Trustees to command its resources. It is, therefore, as much the duty of Trustees to employ a teacher as competent to teach more advanced

Public School pupils in their section as to teach the beginners; and the best economy is to employ the best teacher that can be obtained, as it is to employ the best physician, or lawyer, or mechanic.

5. The thirteenth section of the Act contains a most important provision for introducing into the schools "the teaching of the elements of Natural History, of Agricultural Chemistry, of Mechanics, and of Agriculture," and makes it the duty of the Council of Public Instruction to train teachers, prepare a programme of studies, and select text-books for that purpose—thus giving the public schools a practical character in connection with various industrial pursuits of the country that they have never yet possessed, but which has recently been largely provided for by the Legislature.

6. The fifteenth section of the new School Act also provides against injuriously small school divisions; and the sixteenth section of the Act provides for a majority of the Trustees, or any five rate-payers, a competent and impartial tribunal of appeal against an unjust or hurtful formation or alteration of the boundaries of their school section.

7. The seventeenth section of the Act provides facilities for procuring suitable school sites, such as have often been applied for by Trustees and others, but which have not heretofore been provided by law.

8. By the twenty-seventh section of the Act, the Division Court is substituted for the often tedious and uncertain mode of arbitration for the settlement of pecuniary disputes between Trustees and Teachers.

9. By the second sub-section of the thirtieth section of the Act, more extensive and defined powers are given to the Collector appointed by Trustees; and by the *third* sub-section of the same section, the *restriction* heretofore imposed upon Trustees in employing a teacher for the ensuing year between the first of October and the second Wednesday in January, *is repealed*.

10. By these provisions of the new School Act, and others to which I need not refer, great additional facilities are provided to enable Trustees to fulfil the important and responsible trust committed to them by their fellow-citizens for the sound Public School education of all the youth of the land—a trust which I doubt not you will fulfil in a manner worthy of your office, and commensurate with the best interests of our beloved country.

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Very faithfully yours,

E. RYERSON.

III.—TO TEACHERS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN ONTARIO.  
GENTLEMEN,

The new School Act contains more provisions to advance the profession and position of teachers of Public Schools than any School Act which has been passed by our Legislature since 1850.

1. It makes all the schools free by law, and thus relieves teachers of all labour, and frequent difficulties and losses, arising out of the rate bills on pupils.