

working. That does not mean, however, that uniformity is to be set up as an object of worship. Uniformity is to a certain extent necessary, or at least highly convenient; but divergences from uniformity are rather to be encouraged than otherwise. The late Principal Grant spoke once in favor of testing educational ideas, not throughout the whole Province, but in certain localities. In *voluntary public schools* this can be done without deranging or complicating the general system, and the results have been such as fully to justify the maintenance of the school.

What should be the guiding spirit and policy of such an institution? Some persons regard it as carried out on the lines of an English *voluntary school*, and approve or disapprove of it accordingly. It seems to us that this conception is too narrow. There are excellent features in the great English schools. But these schools were not made to order, according to certain patterns, from which no departure was allowed. They grew out of the conditions of English society, just as the oak grows out of the English soil. Go into Scotland or into Germany and you will find the education of boys conducted on entirely different lines. If the question were asked, which is the

best? the answer would be that each has its good features and its defects, but that each is suited to its environment and to the needs and ideas of the people. So a Canadian *school* must be distinctively Canadian. That does not mean, of course, that it is to be conducted in a narrow spirit of national conceit. There are good educational ideas everywhere, in the United States, in Great Britain, in Germany, in France. We want the best of all of them, so far as they can be applied to Canada. We ought to be ready to learn of all, and yet to apply to every educational idea and method the test of applicability to the conditions of this country. In this way distinctively Canadian schools will grow up and flourish like the natural products of the soil.

Of course these remarks apply to the general educational system of this country as well as to institutions like Upper Canada. The special advantage of these institutions is the opportunity they give for freedom of teaching and departures from uniformity in method. If a rule is found to work badly it can be changed without causing widespread inconvenience. In this way these schools, instead of injuring, may benefit other *primary* institutions of learning.

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"I hear a whisper running  
So musical and free,  
In accents soft and gentle,  
Thro' earth, and air, and sea.  
Come, listen to its pathos,  
In ecstasy of hope,

Now humming through the meadows  
And down the mountain's slope.  
The trees take up their rustle,  
The grass begins to wave,  
And all the feathered songsters  
Sing in each grot and cave."