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CONTENTS OF THIS NUMBER:

	PAGE
I. COUNTY SCHOOL CONVENTIONS IN UPPER CANADA.—Official Circular from the Chief Superintendent to the Municipal Councillors, Local Superintendents, Visitors, Trustees, Teachers, and other supporters of Public Schools in Upper Canada	177
II. THE GRAMMAR SCHOOLS OF UPPER CANADA.—(1) Circular from the Chief Superintendent of Education to Boards of Trustees of Grammar Schools in Upper Canada—with the New Grammar School Improvement Act and Regulations. (2) Circular to Wardens of Counties in Upper Canada, on the New Grammar School Improvement Act. (3) Circular to Mayors of Cities in Upper Canada, on the New Grammar School Improvement Act. (4) Circular to Mayors of Towns, and Reeves of Incorporated Villages in Upper Canada, on the New Grammar School Improvement Act. (5) Revised Programme of Studies, and General Rules and Regulations for the Government of Grammar Schools in Upper Canada	178
III. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES.—No. 61 Right Honourable Lord Viscount Palmerston.....	184
IV. PAPERS ON METEOROLOGY.—(1) Meteorology in Upper Canada. (2) Meteorological Instructions.....	186
V. DEPARTMENTAL NOTICES	187

COUNTY SCHOOL CONVENTIONS IN UPPER CANADA.

OFFICIAL CIRCULAR FROM THE CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT TO THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS, LOCAL SUPERINTENDENTS, VISITORS, TRUSTEES, TEACHERS, AND OTHER SUPPORTERS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN UPPER CANADA.

GENTLEMEN,—When I began, in 1844, to apply myself to establish and mature our present system of public elementary instruction, it was part of my plan to visit foreign educating countries once in five years, in order to acquire information, to observe the nature, working and progress of systems of public instruction, so that we might in our educational system and institutions profit as much as possible by the example and experience of other enlightened countries. It was also another part of my plan to visit each County in Upper Canada once in five years, in order to acquire local information as to the circumstances and wishes of the people, to hold free consultations as to the working, progress and defects of our own system of public instruction, and the best means of improving and adapting it to the institutions and wants of the country.

2. My last quinquennial tour was made in January, February and March of 1860; but my health did not permit me to undertake the great labour of another tour last year; and the absorption of the public mind with the subject of confederation and other exciting questions, seemed to render it inopportune for me to hold public County conventions on school matters.

3. I purpose in the course of the next three months, Providence permitting, to make my fourth and probably last visit to each County, or union of Counties in Upper Canada, in order to hold a County school convention of all school officers and other friends of general education who may think proper to attend. The law

makes it the duty of each local superintendent "to meet and confer with the chief superintendent of education, at such time and place as he may appoint, when making an official visit to the County for the promotion of the interests of education." By law, all Clergymen, Judges, Members of the Legislature, Members of County Councils, Magistrates and Aldermen, are *School Visitors*. I will be happy to meet and confer not only with School Visitors and Local Superintendents, but also with as many Trustees, Teachers, and Friends of Education generally, as can make it convenient to attend—including, of course, such Trustees and other school officers and promoters of Education, as reside in the cities, towns and incorporated villages in each County, within the limits of which a County Convention shall be held.

4. The object of each Convention will be:—

(1.) To consider any suggestions which may be made for the amendment of the school law, for the improvement of the schools, for the diffusion of education, and for the extension and usefulness of prize books and public libraries.

(2.) To consider, especially, whether or not it would be desirable to have one Board of School Trustees for each Township, as there is one Board of Trustees for each City, Town, and Incorporated Village; and whether the Township Council should not be such Board of School Trustees—thus putting an end to the trouble and disputes arising from School Section divisions and alterations, the election of Section Trustees, and the levying and collecting of School Section rates, &c.—greatly simplifying the machinery of the School System, leaving to parents a larger discretion as to the selection of a school for their children, and giving greater permanency to the situation of teachers. In several of the neighbouring States, where the system of Township Boards of School Trustees has been established in the place of School Section Trustees, the advantage is said to be immense. The Township Board would, of course, appoint for each school a Visiting Committee of three, who would visit the school from time to time, and report annually, or oftener, its state and progress to the Board.

(3.) It is also proposed to consider whether each Municipal Council should not be invested with power to bring to account and punish by fine, or requiring to work on the roads, parents who do not send their children, between seven and fifteen years of age, to some school at least four months in each year.

5. Such are the subjects on which I propose to ascertain the opinions and wishes of the country, as far as possible: for, as the School System has been thus far remarkably successful, and the country at large has so nobly sustained and extended it, I do not