

Free Schools in Nova Scotia

measures of reform in this direction were agitated. But these conditions passed away without any practical outcome, save only the comforting thought that the public mind was not prepared for so radical a measure.

The question of Free Schools was first brought emphatically before the Government and Legislature of the Province by Mr. John William Dawson—better known as the distinguished scientist Sir William Dawson, a native of Pictou County. He was the first Superintendent of Education, an office which he held for about two years (1850-2). By his lectures and institutes in various parts of the province he contributed much to the awakening of an interest in education and to developing public sentiment in favor of free schools. He failed, however, to persuade the Government that the time had come for the proposed measure. And so the first Superintendent of Education in Nova Scotia resigned his office, leaving the pioneer work to be completed by others.

The most tangible outcome of Mr. Dawson's efforts was the Normal School for the training of teachers. This institution