

School Law confers upon you all the powers of establishing and maintaining your schools (Classical as well as Common,—see 12th section, 4th clause) which are conferred upon the School Corporations of the cities referred to; and my earnest desire and prayer is, that you may be disposed and enabled to exercise these powers with like wisdom, patriotism and success.

It is in the character and facilities of public school education in their cities and towns that our American neighbours far excel us. I think our rural schools, as a whole, are advancing more rapidly than theirs; but in each of their cities and towns they have in efficient operation an uniform and magnificent system of schools, the advancement of which is the highest ambition of their highest citizens, and which offers FREE education to the poor as well as the rich—to all classes upon equal terms according to property. In all our cities and towns we now have substantially their school law; and I fervently hope we shall soon have as good, and even better schools. It is with the elective Board of School Trustees in each city and town in Upper Canada to say whether this shall be so or not.

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient servant and fellow-labourer,

E. RYERSON.

P. S.—It may be proper for me to make an explanatory remark on the nineteenth section of the School Act, authorizing, under certain circumstances, the establishment of Protestant and Roman Catholic Separate Schools. In my late Circular to Township Councils, I have remarked upon this provision of the Act, and shown that it is no new provision, but one which has existed upwards of seven years—since the commencement of our present Common School system. It has clearly been intended from the beginning as a protection of the minority against any oppressive or invidious proceedings on the part of the majority in any School division, in addition to the ordinary provision of the Act, prohibiting the compulsory attendance of any child upon a religious exercise, or reading a religious book, to which his parents or guardians shall object. The existence of so few separate schools (only about fifty in all Upper Canada, and nearly one-half of them Protestant), shows that the provision for their establishment is rarely acted upon,—as the local school authorities seldom find occasion for it. And as there can be no Separate School in a school division, unless the Teacher of the mixed school is of a different religious persuasion from the applicants for such Separate School, the local Board of Trustees can always, if they think proper to do so, make such a selection of Teachers as will prevent the establishment or continuance of separate schools.

E. R.

[OFFICIAL.]

*Notice to the Local Superintendents of Schools, and the Trustees of District Grammar Schools throughout Upper Canada.*

EDUCATION OFFICE,

Toronto, 8th October, 1850.

By the 28th section of the School Act, 13th and 14th Victoria, chapter 48, the Board of Trustees of the Grammar Schools and the Local Superintendents of Schools in each County or Union of Counties, are constituted a Board of Public Instruction for such County, or Union of Counties; and under the authority given in the 35th section, and 3rd clause of said Act, I hereby appoint the first meeting of each County Board of Public Instruction to be held on Thursday, the fourteenth day of November next, at 10 o'clock, A. M., at the place of the last meeting of the Council of such County, or Union of Counties. When once assembled, the law authorizes each County Board to appoint the times and places of its own meetings.

E. RYERSON,

Chief Superintendent of Schools, U. C.

*Circular from the Chief Superintendent of Schools to each of the County Boards of Public Instruction in Upper Canada.*

[OFFICIAL.]

EDUCATION OFFICE,

Toronto, 8th October, 1850.

GENTLEMEN:—

I transmit you herewith a copy of the Programme for the Examination and Classification of Teachers of Common Schools, which has been adopted by the Council of Public Instruction, as required by the School Act, 13th and 14th Victoria, chapter

48; and I think it proper, at the same time, to make a few explanatory and practical remarks on the subject.

1. You will observe that the standard of qualifications prescribed for each class of Teachers, is extremely *low*;—lower indeed, than in strict propriety it ought to be—lower than it is for Common School Teachers in Ireland—lower than it will doubtless be in Upper Canada in the course of three or four years. The standard here laid down for *first* class Teachers, will probably soon be applied to second class Teachers, and that of second, applied to *third* class Teachers, and no persons will be admitted into the public schools as legally qualified Teachers whose qualifications will not enable them to secure a second class certificate according to the accompanying Programme. But the Council of Public Instruction has had regard to the present circumstances of the country, to the fact that this is the first step which has yet been adopted for establishing an uniform standard and system of examination of teachers throughout Upper Canada. It is painful to think, that there should be a necessity in any part of the Province, to license persons as teachers with no higher qualifications than those required of *third* class teachers in the accompanying Programme; but it is hoped such a necessity will not long exist: and every teacher of this class should be impressed with the consideration, that if he wishes to be recognized in future years as a legally qualified Teacher of Common Schools, he must apply himself diligently to the acquisition of higher qualifications. The profession of School-teaching can only be efficient, and influential, as the qualifications and character of its members are respectable and elevated. The accompanying Programme states the *minimum* of qualifications required for each class of certificates.

2. But the first, and perhaps most important duty which devolves upon you, is that which precedes an examination into the intellectual qualifications of candidates. The law expressly declares, that "*no certificate of qualification shall be given to any person as Teacher, who shall not furnish satisfactory proof of good moral character.*" This is a vital point, on which you are called to pass a conscientious and impartial judgment, before you admit any candidate to an examination. The law of the land thus makes you the moral guardians of the children and youth of your respective counties, as far as depends upon the moral character of their Teachers, the same as the Divine law makes you the guardians of your own children; and you should certainly license no character to teach the former, whom you would not permit to teach the latter. Many representations have been made to this Department respecting, intemperate, and profane, and Sabbath-breaking Teachers. To what extent these representations are well founded, is not for me to say. But when so many parties have been *individually* authorized to license Teachers, it were not surprising if isolated *individual* firmness should be overcome by the importunity of a candidate in some instances, backed by requests of inconsiderate Trustees. Now, however, you meet in Council; the candidates come before you on common ground; you judge of the "moral character" of each by a common rule; you are less liable to those plaintive appeals and pleas which have so often been pressed upon the feelings of individual Superintendents and Visitors. I can not but regard it as your special mission to rid the profession of common school teaching of unworthy characters and of wholly incompetent persons, to protect the youth against the poison of a vicious teacher's example, and to lay the foundation for greatly elevating the profession of school teaching, and greatly increasing the efficiency and usefulness of Common Schools. The moral character of teachers involves the deepest interests of our offspring, and the widest destinies of our country. No lax expediency or false delicacy should be permitted to endorse a person of irregular habits or doubtful morals as a "*good moral character*," and let him loose upon society, authorized and certified as a duly qualified Teacher of its youth. I am sure you will agree with me, that your certificate should state what you believe to be strictly true, and therefore be a guarantee to Trustees of Schools and parents of children, in regard to the moral character and intellectual qualifications of every Teacher whom you shall license.

3. As to your examination of candidates in the several subjects mentioned in the Programme, I had at first intended to have prepared some general questions on each subject, as hints both to examiners and candidates for certificates of different classes; but on further consideration, I found it would occupy too much space, and might probably be better left to the discretion and judgment of