

INTRODUCTORY SKETCH

OF THE

SYSTEM OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTION

IN UPPER CANADA.

The description and illustrations of the buildings for the Normal and Model Schools for Upper Canada, given in the following pages, together with the account of the imposing ceremony of laying the chief corner stone, suggests the propriety of presenting a brief outline of that system of public elementary instruction, with which those schools are now so essentially connected.

The origin of the common school system of Upper Canada, as now established, is as follows :—Annual parliamentary grants were made in aid of common schools for more than thirty years, but expended without system, and with but little advantage to the country. In 1841, the first law was passed (introduced and conducted through the Legislative Assembly by the Hon. S. B. HARRISON, then Secretary of the Province) embodying the great principle of granting money to each county, upon the condition of such county raising an equal amount by local assessment. Considerable opposition was made at first in many parts of the Province to the principle of that Act ; and it is said that when the Hon. R. BALDWIN was engaged, in 1841, in an election contest in the county of Hastings, and was informed of the opposition against him, even among many of his own friends, on account of his supporting such a principle of school taxation, he answered in effect that he would rather loose his elec-