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REPORT OF THE CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION FOR LOWER CANADA FOR 1856.

We are indebted to the Hon. Mr. Chauveau for a copy of the English version of the Report on Public Instruction for Lower Canada, for 1856, which has been published for some time in French. As it may be of interest to some of our readers, we will make some extracts from this important document.

The Report is divided into three sections; the first contains remarks on the operation of the new educational laws, the second contains suggestions of new reforms to be introduced, and the third is devoted to a review of the statistics collected during the past year. It is followed by three appendices—the first contains the statistical tables; the second, the circulars, regulations and reports made by the Superintendent to the date of the Report (2nd May 1856,) and in the third are to be found extracts from the reports of the several school inspectors. The whole forms a document of 244 pages, 8vo.

In the first part, the Superintendent congratulates Lower Canada on the results obtained by the recent legislation on school affairs, and more particularly with regard to the increase in the assessment and the more regular collection of the monthly fees.

One of the most important clauses of the laws on education passed last year, says the Superintendent, is, without doubt, that which grants to school municipalities the power of doubling the amount of their assessments, and the obligation imposed upon them

to collect regularly the monthly fees, for all children of age to attend school: I considered it necessary, however, to interpret these two requirements of the law, the one by the other, and therefore, in some municipalities in which it would seem difficult to insist upon the collection of the monthly fees, and where the people appeared to prefer the levying an additional amount of assessment equivalent to these fees, I thought it would be better, for this year, to allow them their share of the grant, as by law I am empowered to do.

Besides this, the advantage of a system of which, the value of property and the number of children to be taught, form the basis, appears to be generally felt. Out of 490 school municipalities, only 65 have not, this year, collected their monthly fees; of this number, 51 have furnished an amount of additional assessment, equal to the minimum amount of the fees. The 14 other municipalities are almost all poor, exempt even from assessment. The few municipalities who still refuse to obey the law in this respect, have received due warning to conform to its requirements, and their share in the next half year's grant will be withheld until they have levied at least the *minimum* amount of the monthly fees.

When this law was passed, it appeared to me to be the general impression that the clause permitting municipalities to increase the amount of their assessments would prove a dead letter, or that very few of them would take advantage of it. Those who entertained such an opinion, will be astonished to learn, that more than one half of them have raised their annual assessment. Three have actually increased it fourfold, 16 have tripled the usual annual tax, 101 have doubled it, 22 have increased it a half, 39 a third, 34 a quarter, and 14 a fifth. Forty others have also raised their assessment, in a small amount, so that out of a total of 490 municipalities, 271 have already taken advantage of the enactments of the new law.

Besides the increase in the annual assessment, the new blank returns which I caused to be printed for the use of the school Commissioners, contain columns in which the amount of additional assessment for the payment of debts, imposed by virtue of a clause in the new law, voluntary contributions, fuel wood, &c., furnished, are to be specified. Under the head of "assessments over and above the amount of the grant and special assessments," the third column in statement B, indicates as well the amount of the increase of the assessment as also all extraordinary contributions, and it is this amount which I shall hereafter designate as "*additional contributions.*"