

The Reverend Doctor Ryerson addressed the Committee, remarking upon the nature and objects of the principal provisions of the Common and Grammar School Amendment Bills,—upon the development of the System of Public Instruction,—upon the change which he had proposed in the Department,—and his retirement from its administration.

Referring to the Common School Amendment Bill, Doctor Ryerson stated that in January, February and March of 1866, he made his last official Tour of Upper Canada, and consulted the people at County School Conventions as to the provisions desired for further simplifying and improving the School Law. At the close of that Tour he prepared a Draft of Bill to give effect to the recommendations of the Conventions, and proceeded to the Seat of Government to get the Bill passed by the Legislature then in Session; but, as that was expected to be the last Session of the Legislature of United Canada, it was suggested and agreed upon, to leave the School Law of Upper Canada to be considered by the proposed Upper Canada Legislature after the Confederation. Three leading provisions of the now proposed Common School Amendment Bill were pronounced upon by the County Conventions, whose proceedings were given in the Annual School Report for 1866. In regard to "Township Boards of Education," of forty County Conventions, twenty-five formally expressed a desire to adopt the principle of Township Boards; in one Meeting the Resolution affirming the principle was lost, and ten passed Resolutions in opposition to that principle.

Although a large majority of the Conventions expressed themselves in favour of Township Boards, yet, as the minority opposed to them was so considerable, he (Doctor Ryerson) had only proposed to make the establishment of them permissive, on the vote of a majority of the School Sections in a Township, instead of requiring a unanimous vote, as the law now requires.

In regard to County Boards of Public Instruction, "Of the forty County Conventions, thirty-five affirmed the principle of appointing Boards of Examiners for each County by the Governor-in-Council; also of uniform Examination Papers and simultaneous Examinations. The others took no action on the question, or did not report their proceedings."

In the proposed Bill, it was provided, that each County Board of Examiners, (now consisting of all the Grammar School Trustees and Local Superintendents of a County,) should consist of members with prescribed qualifications, but appointed by the County Council, as at present.

Respecting what has been called "Compulsory Education," of forty County Conventions, thirty-seven affirmed the principle of the duty of the State to render penal the neglect of Parents to avail themselves of the opportunities afforded for the education of their children. Two Conventions declined to take any action on the matter, and three have not reported their proceedings.

The Bill, as approved by the Committee, after Doctor Ryerson's explanation, provided for the application of this principle in the most lenient and liberal manner possible.

As to having properly qualified County Superintendents, instead of numerous and often unqualified Local Township Superintendents, Doctor Ryerson stated that there was scarcely any difference of opinion, as also against sudden changes in the boundaries of School Sections, and on enabling School Sections to provide Teachers' Residences.

In regard to frequent changes of Teachers, he stated that all persons of experience in all Countries where it was allowed, admitted the evil of it. In the most free and locally republican Countries in Europe, Holland and Switzerland, (in addition to all the German States), this was provided against; and what was proposed in the Bill suggested a remedy for the evil in the most modified form, and only after the Teacher had proved his efficiency by a six months' Trial. A County Superintendent had nothing to say in the employment of a Teacher, and would, of course, desire the removal of any inefficient one. Besides, whatever power was given to a County Superintendent in this and other

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