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## OFFICIAL CIRCULARS OF THE CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT ON THE NEW SCHOOL LAW OF ONTARIO.

### I.—TO THE WARDEN AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNTY COUNCILS IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO.

SIR,—I address through you, the County Council over which you preside, this circular on the subject of the new School law. We have jointly and harmoniously laboured together during more than a quarter of a century for the education of the youth of our common country. Closely approaching my three score years and ten, I have been anxious, before leaving the administration of the School system to other hands, to remedy, as far as I could, such defects in the School law as my own long experience had suggested, and as have been felt by local school authorities; to supply wants unprovided for, or created by the progress of the school system, and to adapt it as completely as possible to the present state of society and of our Municipal institutions. To do this I have taken special pains and incurred much labour. I have made a fourth tour of inquiry and examination into the school systems of foreign educating countries, both in Europe and America, and reported to the Government the results, with recommendations for the improvement of our own school system. These recommendations were submitted to a very large select Committee of our Legislative Assembly, (a Committee selected without reference to party). The Bill which the Committee reported as the result of its lengthened and minute deliberations, was afterwards submitted by me, for consultation, to County School Conventions held in the various Counties of the Province. In the final Draft of Bill, I embodied those provisions only which received general approval after so much con-

sultation; and expected it would meet with the equally general approval of the Legislative Assembly, if not pass without a division, as did the Grammar School Improvement Bill which I submitted to the Legislature of United Canada in 1865. But, to my surprise and regret, it met with a degree of opposition, and since an amount of misrepresentation, such as no previous School Bill has ever encountered. I am, however, thankful to be able to say that the Bill has passed the Legislative Assembly, not only unimpaired, but greatly improved in its provisions in respect to High Schools and other details.

1. The establishment of *Free Schools* by LAW has been long and almost unanimously desired by the country; and the corresponding provision to secure to each child in the land Public School instruction during four months of each year from the age of seven to twelve years inclusive, and providing means to enable Trustees to enforce this provision in any case of wilful delinquency.

2. County Councils have complained of the expensiveness of County Boards of Examiners, consisting, as they have done, of all Trustees of Grammar Schools and Local Superintendents; and Teachers have complained of being examined for certificates of qualifications, and their schools being inspected, by persons who had never been school teachers. Both of these grounds of complaint have been removed by the new School Act. Under the authority of the 11th Section of the new School Act (of which I have sent herewith two or three copies), each County Council appoints a Board of Examiners consisting of from three to five members, whose qualifications are to be prescribed by the Council of Public Instruction. The Council of Public Instruction has already prescribed the qualifications of examiners as follows:—

“All Head Masters of Grammar or High Schools, and all graduates who have proceeded regularly to their degrees in any University in the British Dominions, and have taught in a College or School not less than three years; and all Teachers of Common or Public Schools who have obtained a first-class Provincial certificate of qualifications, or who may obtain such certificate under the provisions of the present law, shall be considered legally qualified to be appointed members of a County or City Board of Examiners without further examination, on their obtaining from the Education Department, for the satisfaction of the County Council or City Board, a certificate of their having complied with this regulation, and being eligible under its provisions.”

3. Your Council will select from these three classes of legally