

States School Reports is the large amount of dollars paraded in their pages, and also, that the comparative conditions of the schools of different States is estimated by the comparative excess or diminution of the amounts of school monies which these States are capable of raising. In 1849 and 1850 the Canadian Municipal Councils refused to make the amount of the school assessment a criterion of educational progress. Many of them believed that the attempt to make this a criterion was a fraud practised on the country, as it has turned out to be. They, therefore, very properly and in accordance with their duty as guardians of the municipal corporate interests resisted it. But as it was the criterion in the States, from whence the rest of the Canadian School System had been imported, there was no alternative but to permit the Importer, on the faith of his profession and assurances, to have his own way in this particular as he had been allowed in every other. The measure of 1850 became law. Independent Boards of School Trustees were thereafter elected by household suffrage. These Trustees, invested with unlimited powers, have since obliged the Municipal Councils to assess for whatever amounts they have ordered. The school fund has consequently swelled to the desired dimensions. And similarly as in the United States, every successive annual report parades the astonishing increase of the aggregate school monies, as a criterion of the unprecedented progress of education.

But there is an important principle involved in the right of the General Government to create, in a municipality, a power greater than the Municipal Council. It is clearly a violation as I have said, of the true theory of self-government, which makes the council supreme in the assessment and expenditure of monies for local purposes.

Neither can it be justly assumed that a Board of School Trustees elected for a specific object can be equally impartial with a Council acting for the general good. If such assumption could be vindicated, it would follow that a special board for each department of the business of a municipality should be instituted; otherwise there is no satisfactory reason why a school board any more than a street board or a license board should be independent.

The greatest objection however to an Independent School Board is that its members are generally of an inferior standing both in education and respectability, and, with rare exceptions, could not obtain a seat in the Council. If a position in society and an acquaintance with general municipal business are to be considered recommendations in a public functionary, then is the Council more competent than a Board of School Trustees; for it is composed, not of theorists who are practically engaged in illustrating the falsity of their own principles, but of shrewd, intelligent business men, many of them holding the first rank in the community. On this head, and in order to shew how different and how much more correct is the idea of municipal self-government