

LORD ELGIN

In the course of time elementary education became practically free. The success of the system in the progressive province of Upper Canada largely rested on the public spirit of the municipalities. It was engrafted on the municipal institutions of each county, to which provincial aid was given in proportion to the amount raised by local assessment. The establishment of normal schools and public libraries was one of the useful features of school legislation in those days. The merits of the system naturally evoked the sympathy and praise of the governor-general, who was deeply interested in the intellectual progress of the country. The development of "individual self-reliance and local exertion under the superintendence of a central authority exercising an influence almost exclusively moral is the ruling principle of the system."

Provision was also made for the imparting of religious instruction by clergymen of the several religious denominations recognized by law, and for the establishment of separate schools for Protestants or Roman Catholics whenever there was a necessity for them in any local division. On the question of religious instruction Lord Elgin always entertained strong opinions. After expressing on one occasion his deep gratification at the adoption of legislation which had "enabled Upper Canada to place itself in the van among the nations in the important work of providing an efficient system of education for the whole community," he pro-