

—which must, in a high degree, be injurious to the interests of public morals no less than to the interests of children and of the common schools.

4. But, it may be asked, ought not religious instruction to be given in day schools, and ought not government to require this in every school? I answer, what may or ought to be done in regard to religious instruction, and what the government ought to require, are two different things. Who doubts that public worship should be attended and family duties performed? But does it therefore follow that government is to compel attendance upon the one, or the performance of the other? If our government were a despotism, and if there were no law or no liability, civil or religious, but the absolute will of the Sovereign, then government would, of course compel such religious and other instruction as it pleased,—as it is the case under despotisms in Europe. But as our government is a constitutional and a popular government, it is to compel no farther in matters of religious instruction than it is itself the expression of the mind of the country, and than it is organized by law to do. If with us, as in despotic countries, the people were nothing politically or civilly but slaves and machines, commanded and moved by the will of one man, and all the local school authorities were appointed by him, then the schools might be the religious teachers of his will; but with us the people in each municipality share as largely in the management of the schools, as they do in making the school law itself. They erect the school-houses; they employ the teachers; they provide the greater part of the means for the support of the schools; they are the parties immediately concerned—the parents and pastors of the children taught in the schools. Who then are to be the judges of the nature and extent of religious instruction to be given to the pupils in the schools—these parents and pastors, or the Executive Government, counselled and administered by means of heads of departments, who are changed from time to time at the pleasure of the popular mind, and who are not understood to be invested with any religious authority over the children of their constituents?

Extracts from Speeches at the Opening of the new Normal School building in Toronto U. C.

Chief Justice Robinson.—With everything to urge and to tempt them to the acquisition of knowledge, and everything to aid them in obtaining it, it will be impossible that the people of Canada can do otherwise than feel, that in their case emphatically “*poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction.*” It must take time, no doubt, before the prevailing influence of education can be

so fully felt. The dispersion through so large a country, of a sufficient number of qualified teachers by the instrumentality of this Normal School, cannot be instantaneous. Various circumstances concur to limit the number pressing forward in each year to avail themselves of its advantages—but the advance will still be rapid. It will be a quickly multiplying process.—every well-informed and well-trained teacher will impart what he has learned to many, who in their turn, though they will not be all teachers, will all contribute in some degree, by what they have acquired, to raise the general standard of intelligence—crimes and vices, no doubt there will be, while there are men born with impetuous passions and with weak understandings; but the number of offences must be diminished, for there will be fewer to countenance, and more to reprove them. But I have already detained you too long. We shall have, I hope, from the Rev. Superintendent, and from other gentlemen, some interesting details of the system and progress of the Normal and Model Schools, which have been founded by the Legislature on so liberal a scale, and are to be henceforth so admirably accommodated. And I am sure you will heartily and sincerely unite with me in the wish that they may become powerful instruments in the hands of Providence for advancing the welfare of this Province, and promoting the temporal and eternal happiness of its people. (Great applause.)

Hon. Mr. Hincks.—I feel that it is the duty of members of the Government to endeavor to be present upon occasions like this, and I only regret that since I have been so seldom able to avail myself of meetings of a similar character to the present. The responsibility of my want of preparation must rest with the Rev. Superintendent, but I have not the slightest doubt that he will be able to give a full explanation of the system which will be pursued here, and I am sure no one is more capable than he to give such an explanation. My own remarks will be brief indeed, for since my arrival in town it has been impossible for me to arrange my thoughts upon the subject. As my worthy friend the chairman has said, I have taken an interest in the various bills which have been introduced upon the subject of Education. I may say with regard to our Municipal and our assessment laws, and other great measures, I am one of those who think that we cannot arrive at perfection at first. It requires the practical experience of the people themselves in the working out these systems before we can reach anything like perfection. All the various measures introduced upon the subject of Common School Education, have been improvements upon the measures that have preceded them (Applause) and I certainly think that the friends of

the system of Education which has prevailed in this Province must feel proud upon the present occasion, for this is a great triumph to their principles this evening.”

“I can speak from my own experience as to the difficulties experienced in obtaining the co-operation of Parliament, to have the necessary funds provided for the purpose of erecting this building. I will say, however, that there never was an institution in which the people have more confidence that the funds were well applied than in this institution. There is but one feeling that prevades the minds of all those who have seen the manner in which this scheme has been worked out. In regard to the school itself, the site has been well chosen, the buildings have been erected in a most permanent manner, and without any thing like extravagance, and I have no doubt there will be no difficulty in obtaining the additional Parliamentary aid necessary to finish them.”

Dr. Ryerson.—“This institution stands forth as in some respects the personification, or the mainspring of that system of public instruction, which has extended its ramifications throughout every part of the Province, and he thought the results at which they had arrived would justify the delay which has occurred in the commencement of these buildings. Though he had given as much attention to this subject as ordinary persons, yet when this task was assigned him, he felt most entirely unprepared to incur the responsibility without further observations, further enquiries, and further investigations, and he was satisfied that but for these previous enquiries, they would never have arrived at their present position. The erection of this building alone is a sufficient justification of the course which has been pursued. Had he not visited the various Normal Schools both in Europe and America, he could not have formed a proper conception of the adjustment of the various parts, and the proper arrangements in a structure of this kind.

“Allusion has been made by the chairman to the establishment of a system of public instruction. The first bill was introduced by the chairman himself. Another bill was introduced two years afterwards by the Inspector General, and subsequently another prepared in 1846 was merely a perfection of that, and the present law is an improved conception of all the previous. He had been assisted in every way and to the utmost extent, that each successive government was able to assist him. He had seen it referred to in a paper of this city that the Normal School has not accomplished the object aimed at. That remark has been made in the absence of information, and in contradiction of fact. The Dr. here referred to the appendix of the last annual report, and to the great demand for teachers from the Normal School.