

tures is, to awaken that spirit and arouse this action. The law requires that a voice should be lifted up on this subject in every School Section in Upper Canada; the commanding authority of that voice will depend upon the ability, the industry, the heart, of each local Superintendent. No man ought to aspire to the office, or retain it a week, who has not the heart and ability to prepare and deliver public lectures in a spirit and manner worthy, in a good degree, of a cause interwoven with every vital interest of our country's civilization and happiness. We cannot be too strongly impressed with the fact, that the administration of the school system is not like that of any other Department of the Public Service—a vigilant and effective oversight of the execution of the law, the protection and development of the country's resources: the due administration of the school system—and indeed, properly speaking, the great object of it, besides the ordinary administration of the law—is to excite and maintain as widely, and in as high a degree, as possible, among all classes of the community, a correct appreciation of the nature and importance of popular education, and a spirit of intelligence, philanthropy, and patriotism in the adoption of the diversified means necessary for the attainment of that end. From the office of the Chief Superintendent, down to the desk of the humblest Teacher, a moral influence, an energy, a vitality should be sent forth in behalf of the education of youth and the diffusion of useful knowledge among the people. If the right spirit glow in the bosom of every Superintendent, it will appear in every public lecture, in every school visit, on every proper occasion in the intercourse of private and public life, and the results will soon be manifest in every municipality of Upper Canada. On the other hand, great must be the responsibility, and deep the disgrace, of any Superintendent, who shall suffer the interests of Schools to droop and die, or linger on in a sickly condition, under his oversight.

5. On the duties of a local Superintendent respecting school books and attending meetings of the County Board of Public Instruction, I will not remark at any length. The former topic I have discussed at some length in my annual School Report for 1849,—which will be printed, and a copy sent to you, in the course of a month or two; and, on the latter topic, some practical suggestions will be made when the Programme for the examination and classification of Teachers shall have been prepared and published. Nor need I here offer any observations upon the duties imposed upon you by the subsequent clauses of this *thirty-first* section of the Act. I doubt not but the several provisions respecting the support and duties of the office of local Superintendent, will contribute very much to its efficiency and usefulness.

6. It therefore remains with each incumbent to say, whether the spirit and intentions of the law shall be fulfilled within his jurisdiction, as far as depends on the performance of the duties of his office. The Act has been passed by the Legislature in the spirit of a generous nationality; the spirit of patriotism prevailed over the selfishness of party during the Parliamentary deliberations on this subject. The Government duly appreciated the wants and interests of the whole country in the preparation of the measure, and all parties in the Legislature cordially responded to it. In the same non-party and national spirit, I hope to see the law administered. In 1841, the common school law of the State of New-York was so amended as to authorize and require the Board of Supervisors of each County (a body in school matters similar to a County Council with us) to appoint a County Superintendent of Common Schools. In a *Digest of the Common School System of the State of New-York*, published in 1844 by the Deputy, under the auspices of the State Superintendent of Schools, I find the following remarks, which I commend to your serious attention:—

As the usefulness of local Superintendents will depend mainly on the influence they shall be able to exercise upon the officers and teachers of Schools, and upon parents and the inhabitants of districts generally, they will endeavour to deserve that influence by their deportment, and studiously to avoid everything which may impair it. Hence it will be indispensable that they should abstain wholly and absolutely from all interference in any local divisions, or in any questions by which the community in any town or district may be agitated; and although they cannot be expected to abandon their political sentiments, yet it is obvious that any participation in measures to promote the success of any political party, will not only diminish their influence and impair their usefulness, by exciting suspicion of the objects of their movements and measures, but will expose the office they hold to a vindictive hostility that will not cease until it is abolished. The intelligence of our people will not tolerate the idea of the agents of public instruction becoming the emissaries of partisan management.

The conviction expressed in the concluding sentences of this quotation, has been painfully realized. As party politics ran high, it was found that the appointments of local Superintendents were made, to a considerable extent, in the spirit of political partizanship, and the influence of the office was frequently employed for partizan purposes. A clamor was soon raised against the office itself, which resulted in its abolition in 1847. Great efforts have been made during the last two years, by the State Superintendent and other experienced educationists, to restore the office, and place it on a better footing than heretofore. These facts are admonitory. A man's qualifications, irrespective of sect or party, should influence his appointment to the office; but when once appointed, and during his continuance in office, he should act in the spirit of impartiality and kindness towards all persuasions and parties. This has been the avowal of the Government and the sense of the Legislature in regard to the office and duties of the Chief Superintendent; and I think it was equally understood and intended, that no tinge of partizanship should attach to the supervision of schools, even in the remotest township of the Province. The spirit of the vow made by the Prussian School Counsellor DINTER, should imbue the heart of every School officer in Upper Canada: "I promised God, that I would look upon every Prussian peasant child as a being who could complain of me before God, if I did provide him the best education, as a man and a Christian, which it was possible for me to provide."

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

E. RYERSON.

[CIRCULAR.]

[OFFICIAL.]

To the Trustees of Common Schools in Upper Canada, on their duties under the new School Act, 13th & 14th, Victoria, Ch. 48.

EDUCATION OFFICE,

Toronto, 12th August, 1850.

GENTLEMEN,—Having caused the new School Act to be printed, and having provided for sending a copy of it to each of the 3,036 Corporations of Common School Trustees in Upper Canada, I now address a few words to you on your duties and responsibilities under the provisions of that Act.

The Correspondence on the Common School Law, which has been recently printed by order of the Legislative Assembly, furnishes evidence that in every communication which I have addressed to the Government on the subject of our school law, during upwards of four years, I have endeavoured to get both Trustees and Teachers placed in a better position, for the fulfilment of their duties and the protection of their interests. I am happy that the provisions of the new Act contain all that I have sought for in both these respects; and I can now congratulate Trustees of Common Schools in Upper Canada on their being placed in a position more favorable for the efficient and satisfactory discharge of their duties, than the Trustees of Common Schools in any State of America.

The new Act confirms all past elections, appointments, contracts, assessments, rates, &c., while it gives to all parties concerned the advantages of its own provisions in the execution of whatever may have been commenced or undertaken under the authority of any previous Act. Nothing, therefore, in any part of our school operations, is, in the slightest degree deranged; but Trustees are provided with additional facilities, as they are invested with new obligations, to fulfil their previous engagements, and provide for the future interests of the schools under their charge. The several clauses of the *twelfth* section of the Act clearly specify the powers and duties of Trustees. I will only advert, at present, to the more important of them.

1. As the Representatives of the people in the Legislative Assembly determine the amount of money to be expended for any object, or the salary of any public officer to be employed; so the Trustees, as the Representatives of the people in a School Section, have the sole power of determining the amount