

LECTURE SECOND.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

In accordance with the intimation given at the close of last Lecture, I have to call your attention, this evening, to the progress which is being made by Canada, Canada West especially, in her higher interests, or those of a mental, spiritual and civil character ; with the prospects which are opening upon her.

Mr. Smith tells us that the number of newspapers in Canada in 1810 was five, which were all published in the Lower Province. Kingston has now, if I am not mistaken, as many ; Hamilton has, I believe, one more ; Quebec somewhere about twice, and Montreal and Toronto each more than thrice the number. Canada West, which in that year had none, must I conclude, from a list I have just seen, have over ninety—not much probably under a hundred. The whole number in the Province I cannot positively say ; but judge it must be at least a hundred and fifty—or thirty to one what it was forty-two years ago.

This, I am disposed to believe, our friends on the other side would call *going ahead*. Ninety where within the memory of by means “the oldest inhabitant” there were none, they would, at all events, recognise as a very creditable advance.

On few things do our neighbours pride themselves more, justly we believe, than on their newspapers. Yet, young as we are, we have nothing to fear from comparison even here.

The number of newspapers in the United States, as stated by Davis in his “Half Century” (p. 93) was 200 “as nearly as can be ascertained,” in 1800; 359 in 1810; 1,000 in 1830; 1,400 in 1840; and in 1850 about 1,600. Of this last number 371 were in the New England States, and 460 in New York. The “World’s Progress” (p. 445) reports 1,555 in 1849. A calculation I have lately seen reckons them now 2,800.

Taking this latter as their present number the supply would be, in proportion to population, equal to about 180 to us; or 90 to Canada West, which is rather under than over the fact.

With twenty millions of people to whom to look for subscribers provided he succeed in securing the general respect, an Editor can, of course, afford an expense for the procuring of information and the command of talent, which would otherwise be beyond his reach. Hence should individual papers be found among our neighbours excelling ours in fulness and ability, it would be but what was reasonably to be anticipated. Whether this be the case in fact, or to what extent, I cannot say ; but from the specimens I have seen on both sides, which have been somewhat numerous, I question whether ours will not, on the whole, compare favourably with theirs in character. My impression is that they will. Without pledging myself for the correctness or propriety of all their contents, which, I conceive, their conductors would not always defend on reflection, I but state the truth when I say that the amount of good writing and good thinking contained in them has often surprised me.

The number of book-stores found in our cities and larger towns, viewed in connection with the extent of their stocks ; and the books contained in the libraries of our various institutions and met in our dwellings, would seem to indicate that a taste for reading exists : while the character of many of them shows it to be to a considerable extent correct ; though, we doubt not, improvement in this particular is at once possible and desirable.

In Education—one of the first interests of a community—a progress highly satisfactory is being made, as the following particulars derived from the Chief Superintendent, the Rev. Dr. Ryerson’s very valuable Report for 1850 demonstrate.

The number of Common Schools in operation in 1846 was 2,589 ; containing 101,912 pupils, and being sustained at an expense of £67,906 19s. 1½d. In 1850 the schools numbered 3,059, and the pupils 151,891 ; with an expenditure of £88,429, 8s. 7½d—an increase of 470 on the schools ; 49,979—close on fifty per cent,—on the pupils ; and, on the amount of expenditure, £20,522 9s. 5½d. Besides this, £14,189 14s. 0½d. was appropriated to the erection or repair of school-houses—an item of which, previous to 1850, no return was made. As compared with 1842 the sum available for the salaries of common school teachers was considerably more than double—being £88,429, against £41,500.

Between 1847 and 1850 the private schools have increased in a still greater ratio, having advanced from 96, with an attendance of 1,831, to 224, with 4,663 scholars—a result gratifying on a variety of accounts. The Academies and District Grammar Schools have advanced, within the same time, from 32, with 1,129 pupils, to 57, with 2,070 ; which is nearly doubling both the institutions and their attendants in the brief space of three years.

The grand total in attendance on educational institutions was in 1842, 65,978 ; in 1846, 101,912 ; and in 1850, 159,678.

Compared with previous years there is in 1850 some diminution in the number of pupils in Colleges and Universities ; which will, we trust, prove only temporary, the attendance having risen between 1847 and 1849, from 700 to 773.

The following particulars, derived from the American Almanac for 1851, will assist us in forming an idea as to how we stand when compared with our neighbours, in regard to the number of our common schools and the parties being educated in them, with the sums expended in their support.

In Ohio, with a population over two and three-fourths ours, there were in 1848, 5,062 schools, with 94,436 pupils, sustained at a cost of \$224,801 44 cents—or £56,200 7s. 3d. ; of which \$149,205 44 cts. were from public funds, and \$75,596 from other sources (p. 277).

Illinois, whose population is over a fourth more than ours, had in 1848, 2,317 schools, with an attendance of 51,447 pupils, supported partly by the proceeds of a school fund and partly by tax. The amount expended for the year I could not gather from the statement given (p. 286).

Michigan with a population nearly two-thirds ours, had in 1849, 3,060 schools, containing 102,871 pupils : towards the support of which \$52,305 37 cts. were paid from the School Fund, and \$75,804 92 cts. from taxation—in all \$128,110 29 cts, or £32,275 1s. 5d.

Michigan had thus in 1849, in proportion to its population, about the same number of scholars we had in 1850. While, however, the number of schools was a third more than ours, in proportion to population (one more only in fact) ; the sum paid for their support was much under one half—a circumstance which, when we consider that our teachers are under, rather than overpaid, suggests doubt as to efficiency. With them the number of female teachers is much larger than with us, which accounts, in part, for the difference.

With a population a fourth over ours, Illinois had in 1848, 271 fewer schools than we had in 1846, with only about half our number of pupils ; about one-third our number of pupils in 1850, with 742 fewer schools.

Ohio had in 1848, with a population two and three-fourths ours, about double our number of schools, with 7,476 less than our number of pupils in 1846 ; considerably under two-thirds our number in 1850. The amount paid for their support came short of ours in 1846 by £11,706 11s. 10½d.

It would thus appear that in the very important matter of Common Schools we are decidedly before the states just named, which may, we suppose, be taken as a fair specimen of those of the west generally.

The number of schools in the State of New York in 1849, was 13,971—a little more than four and one-half ours for 1850, with a population about four and one-twenty-secondth. Of pupils in attendance, the number was 778,309 ; exceeding ours, according to population, in a proportion somewhere near four and one-fifth to four and one-twenty-secondth. On the support of these schools the sum expended was \$1,115,153 62 cents, or £275,788 7s. 7½d—under three and one-fifth ours. For our population then we have in 1850 spent a considerably larger sum on common schools than did the State of New York in 1849.

The pupils taught in private schools in New York State are supposed to amount to about 75,000 ; a number about equal to four times ours, after allowance for the difference in population. In this particular, our neighbours have largely the advantage of us.—[American Almanac, 1851, p. 236.]

Massachusetts had in 1849, 3,749 public schools, with an attendance of about 180,000 pupils (173,659 in summer—191,712 in winter) ; costing \$836,060, or £209,015. Making allowance for the difference in population,—about a fourth more than ours ;—