

try has adopted it as yet. The province of Canada has recently introduced the New England principle of advancing education, but upon a somewhat modified plan. The difference between the two plans principally consists in the manner of introducing it, in order to overcome the prejudices which pervade society as to direct assessment. As soon as the public men and the press laid hold of the principle, the Canadian mind became educated upon this point, which was a work of time and labour, a law was introduced leaving it optional—while the New England plan made it compulsory—with every municipality, to accept the compulsory plan or not, at pleasure; and the law at the same time encouraged its adoption by large grants of money in aid of education from the public treasury. The result has been, that nearly all Upper Canada has voluntarily adopted it, and put in circulation nearly 100,000 volumes of excellent books, consequently the school attendance has been increased from 50 to 300 per cent.

The plan of assessment, as in operation in Canada, is the only one suitable to a growing people; and before we get such a law introduced into the maritime provinces, the public men and the press will have to come boldly to the work of agitation and instruction—removing every objection by the way; and when the public mind once becomes enlightened, and sees the advantages likely to accrue, in the general and more substantial education of the youth of the country, then, and not till then, can such a law be introduced and carried successfully into operation.

The following able article from the School Reports of J. W. Dawson, Esq., formerly Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia, with the views of Dr Ryerson, Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada, embodies the history and progress of the free school movement, and the pleas for its adoption, with answers to every objection that can, with the least degree of plausibility, be urged against it. This article should be carefully read, and the facts set forth properly understood, by every person at all interested in education.

Mr Dawson says:—

“1. My first reason for commending assessment as the best method of providing for the education of your children is, that the people who have been educated

under it for two hundred years, are distinguished for personal independence, general intelligence, great industry, economy and prosperity, and a wide diffusion of the comforts and enjoyments of domestic life. The truth of this remark in reference to the character and condition of the people of the New England States, will, I presume, be disputed by none. If their system of civil government be thought less favourable to the cultivation and exercise of some of the higher virtues than that which we enjoy, the efficacy of their school system is the more apparent under circumstances of comparative disadvantage. I will give the origin of this school system in the words of the English ‘Quarterly Journal of Education,’ published under the superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and at a time when Lord Brougham was Chairman and Lord John Russell Vice-Chairman, of the Committee:

“‘The first hint of this system—the great principle of which is, that the property of all shall be taxed by the majority for the education of all—is to be found in the records of the city of Boston, for the year 1635, when at a public or ‘body’ meeting, a schoolmaster was appointed ‘for the teaching and nurturing of children among us,’ and a portion of the public lands given him for his support. This, it should be remembered, was done within five years after the first peopling of that little peninsula, and before the humblest wants of its inhabitants were supplied, while their very subsistence, from year to year, was uncertain, and when no man in the colony slept in his bed without apprehension from the savages, who not only everywhere crossed their borders, but dwelt in the midst of them.

“‘This was soon imitated in other villages and hamlets springing up in the wilderness. Winthrop, the earliest governor of the colony and the great patron of Free Schools, says in his journal, under date of 1645, that divers Free Schools were erected in that year in other towns, and that in Boston it was determined to allow, for ever, £50 a year to the master, with a house and £30 to an usher. But thus far only the individual towns had acted. In 1647, however, the Colonial Assembly of Massachusetts made provision by law, that every town in which there were fifty families should keep a