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THE NEW SCHOOL ACT FOR ONTARIO.

The New School Act for the Province of Ontario, which we publish below, is the most important measure which has yet been passed by the Legislature of Ontario. In an educational point of view it is second only in importance and value to the present Consolidated School Act, the original of which was passed twenty-one years ago, and which was the first Bill assented to in Upper Canada, by the late lamented Lord Elgin, after the Legislature had been removed to Toronto in 1849. The effect of its operation will be to give an immense impetus to the cause of popular and higher Education in this Province, the results of which as promoting the well-being and progress of the country, it is not easy to estimate. The history of the Bill, which we now publish as an Act of Parliament, is so well known, that we need not recapitulate it. But there are a few points connected with its preparation and passage to which we deem it proper to refer.

The Bill itself was framed after a full and free consultation on most of its proposed provisions at the various County School Conventions held in the winter of 1868-9, by the Chief Superintendent of Education. After its main features had been thus submitted to popular discussion it was formally submitted to the Legislature and was there subjected to an ordeal of a more critical discussion of its details before a large Committee of the House of Assembly, during the Session of 1869-70. As the result of that conference and discussion on its various provisions, it was again, with some modifications, embodied in a Bill, (which

was referred to in the speech from the Throne,) and laid before the Legislature in December, 1870. Although subjected to unusual criticism in the House, and vigorously opposed in some quarters, it is most gratifying to know that the Bill is substantially the same as that first introduced by the Hon. M. C. Cameron, who had charge of the Bill, and who so patiently, and yet so ably, explained and defended its provisions. In no single instance, so far as we are aware, were changes made in any essential principle or feature of the Bill. Several modifications in its details were, of course made, but they were chiefly suggested by its promoters, or without hesitation concurred in by them when offered in good faith and without a party object.

The liberal and practical spirit in which the new Act will be carried out by the Education Department will afford the best answer to, and be an ample vindication of the Chief Superintendent from the unjust aspersions and suspicions which some parties have cast upon him.

As an evidence of the liberal and comprehensive spirit in which the whole Act will be carried out, we refer the reader to the Regulations of the COUNCIL OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION in regard to the "*Qualifications of Public School Inspectors and of County Examiners*," which will be found on the last page. It will be seen by those Regulations that no examination whatever will be required from three classes of persons, viz.:—(1.) The present County and City Superintendents of Schools. (2.) Head Masters of Grammar or High Schools, or (3) from graduates of Universities. All that such persons will have to do is to satisfy the Education Department that they are acquainted with the special subjects of School Organization and Discipline, and the provisions of the law and regulations on those subjects.

AN ACT

TO IMPROVE THE COMMON AND GRAMMAR SCHOOLS OF THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO.

(Received the Royal Assent 15th February, 1871.)

HER Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO BE FREE—FEES IN CITIES, &C., FOR TEXT BOOKS.

1. All Common Schools, which shall hereafter be designated and known as Public Schools, shall be free Schools; and the Trustees of school sections, and the municipal councils of cities, towns, villages and townships, shall, in the manner now provided by law, levy and collect the rate upon all the taxable property of the school division, or municipality, (as the case may be), to defray the ex-