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THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF ONTARIO.

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A FEW words of explanation are necessary to prevent a misapprehension of the title of this paper. The expression Public Schools as here used does not signify all public schools in the Province, but only those which are especially so denominated by the school law. In England the words Public Schools have long suggested Eton, Winchester, Harrow, and other schools of the same class. In Ontario they designate the schools which are established by law for the elementary education of the people, and are distinguished from those which until recently were entitled Grammar Schools, and were intended to afford instruction in the elements of the classical languages as well as in the mother tongue. It is not unworthy of remark, that the term Grammar Schools, as used in the New England States and elsewhere in America, denotes a school in which an ordinary English education is imparted; while a more advanced school, in which classics and mathematics are taught, is

entitled a High School. In Massachusetts and many of the United States these two grades of schools are parts of the same system, and pupils are promoted from the lower to the higher as their improvement may merit and the convenience of their parents or guardians may allow. Such a system is called very properly a Common School System. That of the State of Massachusetts, says the Hon. George S. Boutwell, "dates from 1647." By this system "the power to decree was in the State, the duty to act was in the towns." (The word towns, thus used, is equivalent in meaning to townships in Ontario.) "A public duty was admitted in the education of the whole people at the public expense, without regard to any of the distinctions that are found in social life. An individual right was recognised—the right to intellectual and moral training at the public expense. The power of the State was exercised in the indiscriminate taxation of property for the enlightenment of the masses."