

"their management, and their relation to county, township and School Municipalities." "Free Schools." "County School Inspectors and Boards of Examiners and their qualifications." "Prize books for the schools." "Compulsory Education."

These and kindred subjects connected with both the public and high schools were freely discussed in successive years at these Conventions; nor did I recommend legislation on any one of them without the concurrence of at least two-thirds of these Conventions.

(*Text-books for the Schools.*)—The two subjects which first engaged attention were the Normal School training of teachers and proper text-books for the schools. As this last subject is of the greatest importance, and as recent attempts have been and are being made to break down the system established, I will briefly state its origin and early results, as stated at length with the official papers in my School Reports for 1847 and 1848. In my report for 1847, written in August, 1848, I gave the results of local reports on the subject of school text-books. "There were in use upwards of 295 text-books." The list on the six principal subjects of teaching were—spelling-books, 13; reading-books, 107; arithmetics, 53; geographies, 20; histories, 21; grammars, 16; and on nine other subjects mentioned, 53 text-books. Most of those books were foreign, and in general the prices of them were as high, and the quality of them was as inferior, as their variety was great. To relieve Canadian parents of such a burden, and the schools of such a nuisance, was attended with difficulties, detailed in the reports, but which were speedily overcome. The Canadian Board of Education (designated "Council of Public Instruction" by the Act of 1850) adopted the "Irish National Series of Text-books"—a series prepared by experienced teachers, and unanimously adopted by the Irish National Board of Education, consisting of Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Roman Catholics, and which for nearly forty years have held the first place among the school books used in England and Scotland as well as in Ireland. At the same time a twofold arrangement was effected with the Irish National Board—the one was to obtain the copyright to reprint the books in Upper Canada, and the other was to purchase those books in Dublin at fifty per cent. below their retail prices at home. The Education Department here reprinted no text-book, but gave its right (with a set of the books as models) to reprint the whole of the Irish National text-books to any and every Canadian publisher that might apply, and, by circular invited and endorsed the applications of the booksellers of the Province to purchase and import the original edition on their engaging to sell such books at the rate of not more than a shilling currency for the shilling sterling of the published retail price of them in Great Britain and Ireland. The immediate effect of this arrangement was the issue of two Canadian editions of these text-books, and the importation of the original editions by various booksellers; and the result was a competition, in both quality and prices, between the Canadian reprints and the imported editions of these text-books. In order that no available means might be left unemployed to acquaint the leading minds of Canada with the character of these excellent text-books, and secure their cordial introduction into all our schools, I proposed to the Irish National Board to purchase twenty-five complete sets of their text-books, registers, forms, &c., for presentation to the District and City Councils of Upper Canada, of which there were then only twenty-five; but the Irish National Board, with characteristic generosity, made a donation of twenty-five sets of their publications, one of which set I had the pleasure of presenting to each district and city council, with

the request that they would, by a committee or otherwise, examine both the character and prices of the books, and give public expression to their views. It was by the co-operation of the Municipal Councils I now address that this great boon of a uniform series of text-books was conferred almost simultaneously and universally upon and gladly accepted by our public school authorities, and the heaviest item of expense to parents sending their children to school greatly reduced. In my Annual Report for 1847, written in August, 1848, this first and most important step in our school progress is thus stated:

"I had shown its necessity in my *Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction* for Upper Canada (1846), and I am happy to be able to say that results have justified its adoption, silenced every whisper of opposition, and already secured the support of the public to an extent that could not have been anticipated at so early a period, and which is without a parallel in any State in America. It is just two years since the Board of Education was established, and recommended an uniform series of text books for the schools. The Board employed no powers of prohibition, but provided and suggested facilities for the useful and profitable exertions of private enterprises, and that in connection with measures which led not only to the introduction of school books of an improved character and quality, but to the reduction of nearly twenty per cent. in their prices, thus preparing the way for securing to the whole country the double boon of good and cheap books." (p. 12.)

This series of text-books was continued in our public schools from 1847 to 1867, when they were revised, and the present Canadian Series based upon them was introduced, the copyright of which has been still continued as public property, thus securing competition in their printing and prices, and enabling the Education Department to cause the revision of any one or all of them, as the progress and wants of the schools may require.

(*Maps and Apparatus.*)—The provision for and introduction of maps, globes and other apparatus, as also libraries and prize books, as a part of our school system, are of later date than those for text-books, and are all based upon the principle of providing at cost prices for the Municipal Councils and Boards of Trustees with what they may deem necessary for the interests of schools under their charge, with the further aid of one hundred per cent. upon whatever sums they may provide from local sources.

(*The People's Depository.*)—As all these provisions and distinguishing features of our school system have been adopted only after free and repeated consultations with the people in the several counties and cities, and have been sanctioned and provided for by successive Governments and Parliaments for twenty-five years and more, and as the Municipal Councils and Trustees are the only parties to whom they are rendered available, you will, I am sure, agree with me that no one of them should be crippled, much less abolished, without consulting you and securing your consent. You can at any time be consulted by circulars in the course of a few months, or even weeks; and if you and the Trustees the burden-bearers of all our school operations—deem the long-established agency of the Education Department to provide you with libraries, prize books, maps, globes and other apparatus to aid you in your work, should be abolished, then you will doubtless say so, and the Legislature would then be justified in abolishing it, but not till then. The management of this agency of the People's Depository has not cost the public revenue a farthing; and I am sure the appropriation by the Legislature to extend, through you and the school corporations, the benefits of this agency, will be applied to the best advantage, until the Legislature itself shall have reviewed its past and decided upon its future policy in regard to this, as I am confident, most important element of our