

of British institutions as our fellow subjects of the United Kingdom. Without such a general preparatory system as we see here in operation the instruction of the great mass of our population would be left in a measure to chance. The teachers might be many of them ignorant pretenders, without experience, without method, and in some other respects very improper persons to be entrusted with the education of youth. There could be little or no security for what they might teach, or how they might attempt to teach, nor any certainty that the good which might be acquired from their precepts would not be more than counter-balanced by the ill effects of their example. Indeed the footing which our common school teachers were formerly upon, in regard to income gave no adequate remuneration to intelligent and industrious men to devote their time to the service. But this disadvantage is removed, as well as other obstacles, which were inseparable from the condition of a thinly peopled and unclerical country, traversed only by miserable roads, and henceforward, as soon at least as the benefits of this great Provincial institution can be fully felt, the common schools will be dispensing throughout the whole of Upper Canada by means of properly trained teachers, and under vigilant superintendence, a system of education which has been carefully considered and arranged, and which has been for some time practically exemplified. An observation of some years has enabled most of us to form an opinion of its efficiency. Speaking only for myself, I have much pleasure in saying that the degree of proficiency which has been actually attained goes far, very far beyond what I had imagined it would have been attempted to aim at. It is evident, indeed, that the details of the system have been studied with great care, and that a conformity to the approved method has been strictly exacted; and I believe few, if any, have been present at a periodical examination of the Normal School without feeling a strong conviction that what we have now most to hope for and desire is, that such a course of instruction as they have seen exhibited should be carried on with unrelaxed diligence and care. Of course, I shall be understood to be speaking only with reference to those branches of knowledge which formed the subjects of examination. The one, we all know, a difficulty which has met at the threshold those who have been influential in establishing systems of national education; I mean that which arises from the number of religious sects into which the population is divided. This is not the occasion for entering into any discussion upon that painfully interesting question. Whatever difficulty it has occasioned in England or Ireland must be expected to be found here, applying with at least equal, if not more than equal force. I should be unwilling to suppose that any doubt could exist as to my own opinion on this question, and scarcely less unwilling to be thought so unjust and un candid as not to acknowledge and make allowance for the difficulties which surround it. They are such, I believe, as no person can fully estimate until he has been called upon to deal with them, under the responsibility which the duties of Government impose. In the mean time, resting assured, as we may, that no general system of instruction can be permanently successful which has not the confidence and cordial approval of the sincerely religious portion of the community—that portion, I mean, who will think it worse than folly to aim at being wise above that which is written—we must wait with hope and patience for the solution which this difficulty to which I allude may receive in other countries more competent to grapple with it—trusting that what may ultimately be found to be the safe and satisfactory course may, by the wisdom and good feeling of the majority, be adopted among ourselves. When conflicting opinions upon this subject shall have been reconciled so as to secure the full confidence and approval of those who are not indifferent to religious duties and considerations, it may be hoped that the system which is now being matured may arrive at that state of perfection, in regard to the regulations connected with it, that the Legislature may be able to leave it to operate from year to year without disturbance or material change, so that all classes may become familiar with its working, and that a feeling of attachment to it may have time to form before all associations connected with the subject shall be broken up by the introduction of a new machinery.

For it is not under such disadvantages that institutions like this can do their work. They require to be able to pursue their course of daily duties in peace, and free from the distraction of uncertainty, and the agitation and anxiety of change. (Applause.) I close these observations by again directing to the very remarkable period in the history of this Province at which the Normal School of Upper Canada has taken possession of its magnificent home. We are advancing with a rapidity that surprises ourselves, scarcely less than the people of other countries who have been suddenly awakened to the truth of our astonishing, but inevitable progress. It was but a few weeks ago that I read in the Westminster Review, one of the leading English periodicals that deals most frequently with Colonial subjects, an article written expressly for the purpose of impressing upon the British public a due sense of the importance of the North American Provinces, and of the great interests which with surprising rapidity are springing up within them, and claiming the attention of the mother country. In order to give force to his statements, the writer of this article speaks of it as a fact, which he evidently supposes will take his readers by surprise, but that British North American Provinces contain among them a population of not less than 1,700,000 souls; not imagining that by authentic returns which had been published some months before he was writing, Canada alone contained nearly 150,000 more people than he gave credit for to all these Provinces,—and that in speaking of the whole collectively as he did, with the full purpose of saying as much as he could honestly say for their importance, he had sunk in his statement about 800,000 of their actual population. In all these extensive Colonies of the British Crown, distinguished as they are by a loyal and generous appreciation of their position as a portion of the British Empire, the same spirit of enterprise is at this moment in active employment with the aid of singular advantages, in developing their great national resources. Every thing that we see and feel at the present time, or can discern in the future is full of encouragement to the farmer, the mechanic and the laborer,—and as for the liberal professions it is impossible that they can languish among a prosperous people. When it was proposed to unite the Provinces of Canada, the scheme first submitted to Parliament was to confer municipal institutions by erecting in the whole territory five great District Councils for the municipal purposes, with power to a very considerable extent of controlling the action of the Provincial Legislature. But this suggestion was wisely, I think, abandoned, for these five Councils would have constituted so many little, but not sufficiently little Parliaments, inconveniently clashing with the Provincial Legislative body. In place of these we see established in our numerous counties, townships, cities, towns and villages, councils which better comport with the idea of purely municipal corporations occupying themselves in improving the material and social condition of their respective localities, and smothering, if I may so express myself, the asperities of a rough—because a new country. That these corporate bodies may know how to use, without abusing their powers it is indispensable that the great body of the people by whom they are elected should be intelligent and well disposed—able to distinguish between the evil and the good, not in mo als only, but in what we may call in some degree matters of policy and government. Nothing can ensure this but early discipline, and early and sound instruction. It is true that a little learning may in some cases do harm rather than good to the individual who possesses it, and may make him a less valuable, because a more dangerous member of society than he might have been without it. But these are exceptional cases. It would be as wise to reject the use of railways because an occasional train runs off the track, as to hesitate to give education to the multitude for fear it may in some instances be perverted, as no doubt it will be to bad purposes. But in truth this question is now decided in every free country, and speculations about the comparative advantages of promoting, or neglecting education would be a useless waste of time. The multiplying calls for intelligence in the varieties of employment which are daily increasing—the wonderful cheapness and facility which improvements in the art of printing have given in the production of books and newspapers,

and the quickened circulation of intelligence, which we derive from liberal press arrangements and the magic wonders of the telegraph, must make the probability of being able to read and write so great, and the desire so nearly universal, that not few who may be without such instruction will be made to feel the marked utility of their position. And soon, it will be literally true that in Upper Canada there will be no excuse for any person endowed with ordinary capacity, being found in a condition so degrading to a free man, and so unsuitable to an accountable being. With everything to urge and to tempt them to the acquisition of knowledge, and everything to aid them in obtaining it, it will be impossible that the people of Canada can do otherwise than feel that in their colonies emphatically "poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction." It must take time, no doubt, to wipe the prevailing influence of education can be fully felt. The dispersion through so large a country, of a sufficient number of well qualified teachers by the instrumentality of this Normal School, can not be instantaneous. Various circumstances concur to limit the number pressing forward in each year to avail themselves of its advantages—but the advance will still be rapid. It will be a quickly multiplying process,—every well-informed and well-trained teacher will impart what he has learned to many, who in their turn, though they will not all be teachers, will all contribute in some degree, by what they have acquired, to raise the general standard of intelligence—vices and weaknesses, no doubt there will be, while there are men born with impetuous passions and with weak understandings; but the number of offences must be diminished, so there will be fewer to censure, and more to reprove them. But I have all ready detained you too long. We shall have, I bring from the Rev. Superintendent, and from other gentlemen, some interesting details of the system and progress of the Normal and Model Schools, which have been founded by the Legislature on so liberal a scale, and are to be henceforth so admirably accommodated. And I am sure you will heartily and sincerely unite with me in the wish that they may become powerful instruments in the hands of Providence for increasing the welfare of this Province, and promoting the temporal and eternal happiness of its people. (Great applause.)

Hon. Mr. Hlwers rose amidst great applause. He said, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have seldom found myself in a position of greater embarrassment than I am on the present occasion having to follow a gentleman of the learning and eloquence of the learned Chief Justice, who has just addressed you. I feel particularly embarrassed on the present occasion, because I am under the necessity of saying that I present myself before you totally unprepared to address you in that manner which you have certainly a right to expect from the announcement made in connection with this opening ceremony. When the Rev. Superintendent of Education spoke to me in Quebec two or three weeks ago, upon the subject, I had an idea that I should be called upon to do more than to move a resolution. He then stated to me that this building was to be opened, and was kind enough to invite me to take a part in the proceedings. I felt not only from the interest I have taken in Common School Education, but from the position which I occupy, that it was my duty to avail myself of the opportunity of being present at such a ceremony. I feel that it is the duty of members of the Government to endeavor to be present upon occasions like this, and I only regret that since I have been a member of the Government, I have been so seldom able to avail myself of meetings of a similar character to the present. The responsibility of my want of preparation must rest with the Rev. Superintendent, but I have not the slightest doubt that he will be able to give a full explanation of the system which will be presented here, and I am sure no one is more capable than he to give such an explanation. My own remarks will be brief indeed, for since my arrival in town it has been impossible for me to arrange my thoughts upon the subject. As my worthy friend the Chairman has just now taken an interest in the various bills which have been introduced upon the subject of Education. I may say with regard to this as well as to our Municipal and our assessment laws, and other great measures, I am one of those who think that we cannot arrive at