

Grants under the Act for the Encouragement of Superior Education.

We beg leave to call the attention of the directors of Colleges and Academies to the notice contained in another part of our columns; as it is the settled intention of the government to insist on strictly enforcing the provisions of the Law in the next distribution to be made.

Report of the Chief Superintendent of Public Instruction for Lower Canada for 1856.

In one of our recent issues we published an abstract of the Report of Dr. Ryerson, on Public Instruction in Upper Canada. We have now before us the English version of the Report for Lower Canada, for the same year, which has been published for some time in French. As it must naturally be of great interest to most of our readers, we will quote at length from this document.

The Report is divided in three sections; the first contains remarks on the operation of the new educational laws, the second contains suggestions of new reforms to be introduced and the third is devoted to a review of the statistics collected during the past year. It is followed by three appendices—the first, contains the statistical tables; the second, the circulars, regulations and reports made by the Superintendent to the date of the Report (2d May 1856), and in the third, are to be found extracts from the reports of the several school inspectors. The whole forms a pamphlet of 244 pages in-So.

In the first part, the Superintendent congratulates Lower Canada on the results obtained by the recent legislation on school affairs, and more particularly with regard to the increase in the assessment and the more regular collection of the monthly fees.

One of the most important clauses of the laws on education passed last year, says the Superintendent, is, without doubt that which grants to school municipalities the power of doubling the amount of their assessments, and the obligation imposed upon them to collect regularly the monthly fees, for all children of age to attend school: I considered it necessary however to interpret these two requirements of the law, the one by the other, and therefore, in some municipalities in which it would seem difficult to insist upon the collection of the monthly fees, and where the people appeared to prefer the levying an additional amount of assessment equivalent to these fees, I thought it would be better, for this year, to allow them their share of the grant, as by law I am empowered to do.

Besides this, the advantage of a system of which, the value of property and the number of children to be taught, form the basis, appears to be generally felt. Out of 490 school municipalities, only 65 have not, this year, collected their monthly fees; of this number, 51 have furnished an amount of additional assessment, equal to the minimum amount of the fees. The 14 other municipalities are almost all poor, exempt even from assessment. The few municipalities who still refuse to obey the law in this respect, have received due warning to conform to its requirements, and their share in the next half years grant, will be withheld until they have levied, at least, the minimum amount of the monthly fees.

When this law was passed, it appeared to me to be the general impression that the clause permitting municipalities to increase the amount of their assessments would prove a dead letter, or that very few of them would take advantage of it. Those who entertained such an opinion, will be astonished to learn, that more than one half of them have raised their annual assessment. Three, have actually increased it four-fold, 16 have tripled the usual annual tax, 101 have doubled it, 22 have increased it a half, 39 a third, 34 a quarter, and 14 a fifth. Forty others have also raised their assess-

ment, in a small amount, so that out of a total of 490 municipalities, 271 have already taken advantage of the enactments of the new Law.

Besides the increase in the annual assessment, the new blank returns which I caused to be printed for the use of the school Commissioners, contain columns in which the amount of additional assessment for the payment of debts, imposed by virtue of a clause in the new law, voluntary contributions, fuel wood, &c., furnished are to be specified. Under the head of "assessments over and above the amount of the grant and special assessments," the third column in statement B, indicates as well the amount of the increase of the assessment as also all extraordinary contributions, and it is this amount which I shall hereafter designate as "*additional contributions*."

From this statement it appears that 457 municipalities have by "*additional contributions*" exceeded the amount of their share of the grant; which will only leave 33 municipalities that have not furnished by assessment or voluntary contributions (independently of the monthly fees and taxes for the erection of school houses,) a sum more than equal to that granted by the Government.

In 120 municipalities the amount of additional contributions, equals the ordinary assessment, in some even, it far exceeds it, in 105 others it exceeds the half.

I shall return to this subject, when comparing the statistics of this, with those of preceding years; but I think that I should here point out certain districts of Inspection and certain Municipalities that have distinguished themselves above the others by their noble efforts in the cause of Education.

The districts of Inspection which I consider it my duty to mention are:

1stly. That under the charge of Mr. Inspector Bourgeois. The share in the government grant awarded to this district of Inspection is only £302, and besides the like amount under the requirements of the law, there has been levied £428 additional contribution, £188 monthly fees, and £401 special assessment for the erection of school houses, making in all £1320, that is to say, more than four times the amount of the sum allowed by the government.

2ndly. The district of Inspection under the charge of Mr. Inspector Parmelee, the annual grant to which is only £1635: this district has furnished, besides £1599, amount of the ordinary assessment, £1406 additional contributions; £1576 monthly fees and £1115 assessment for the erection of school houses, forming in all £5720.

3rdly. In the district confided to the care of Mr. Chûds, for which the amount of the grant is £1258, there was raised £1258 of ordinary assessment £1257 additional contributions, £1650 monthly fees, and £566 for assessment for building school houses: in all £4773.

4thly. In Mr. Roney's district of inspection, the total sum levied amounts to £3044, viz: besides ordinary assessments, £666 additional assessment; £1019 for monthly fees; and £560 for the erection of school houses; whereas the amount allowed to this district as its share of the grant only amounts to £808.

5thly. Finally, the district under the inspection of Mr. C. Germain exhibits a total of £4458, viz: £1591, ordinary assessment equal to amount granted; £912 additional assessment; £590 monthly fees, and £1094 special assessment for the erection of school houses. With the exception of two districts situated at the eastern extremity of the province and in such a position that it is astonishing that the main requirements of the law could possibly be carried into effect, all the other districts of inspection have more than doubled the amount of their respective shares of the government grant by additional assessments and monthly fees.

I would particularly point out, for the special attention of the reader the contents of statement B of the appendix, which shows the generous contributions given, and the privations submitted to, by municipalities, of which I can only name a few, which I select, in a general manner, from the poorest, and most recently established among them.

Thus, almost all the municipalities in the district of Gaspé have raised very considerable sums, when compared with their respective shares in the government grant; in the County of Rimouski, St. Germain (or Rimouski,) Lessard, St. Octave de Metis and St. Simon increased their assessments, while they collected at the same time, their monthly fees:

In the County of Charlevoix, the parish of "Les Eboulements" raised £71 by additional assessment and £50 by monthly fees. In the County of Megantic, the municipalities of Aylmer, St. Calixte de Somerset, and St. Ferdinand & Halifax have raised sums, which are really surprising when compared with their respective shares in the government grant. The parishes of St. Nicolas, St. Jean