

REPORT.

To The Right Honorable The EARL OF CATHCART, Governor General, &c. &c. &c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

The letter of the Secretary of the Province, which informed me of my appointment to my present office, contains the following words :

"His Excellency has no doubt that you will give your best exertions to the duties of your new office, and that you will lose no time in devoting yourself to devising such measures as may be necessary to provide proper School Books; to establish the most efficient system of Instruction; to elevate the character of both Teachers and Schools; and to encourage every plan and effort to educate and improve the youthful mind of the country; and His Excellency feels assured that your endeavours in matters so important to the welfare of the rising youth of Western Canada, will be alike satisfactory to the public, and creditable to yourself."

Before undertaking to assume a charge so responsible, and to carry into effect instructions so comprehensive, I felt that the most extended examination of already established systems of Education was desirable, if not indispensably necessary.

Accordingly, I applied, and obtained leave, without any expense to the Province, to visit the principal countries of Europe in which the most approved systems of Public Instruction have been established.

Having devoted upwards of a year to this preparatory part of my task, during which time I have pursued my inquiries in the dominions of nearly twenty different Governments, I now submit to Your Excellency the general conclusions at which I have arrived.

The leading and fundamental part of my assigned task was, "to devise such measures as may be necessary to establish the most efficient system of Instruction." I will, therefore, submit to the consideration of Your Excellency, first, what I have been led to conclude "the most efficient system of Instruction," and secondly, the machinery necessary for its establishment, so as to "elevate the character of both the Teachers and Schools, and to encourage every plan and effort to educate and improve the youthful mind of the country."

In adopting measures so decided for the advancement of the education of the people, the Administration of Canada is but following the example of the most enlightened Governments, and, like them, laying the foundation for the strongest claims to the esteem of the country and gratitude of posterity. On the part of both the free and despotic Governments of Europe, no subject has latterly occupied more attention than that of Public Instruction. The whole subject has undergone the most thorough investigation; and systems both public and private, which had been maturing for ages, extending from the lowest Elementary Schools up to the Colleges and Universities, have been carefully digested and brought into efficient operation.

The improvement and wide extension of the systems of Elementary Instruction form the most prominent, as well as the most interesting feature of this extraordinary development in the policy of both the European and American Governments.

Adequate provisions for Elementary Instruction exist not only in Prussia, Denmark, Sweden, Holland, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Bavaria, Saxony, Austria, and the minor States of Germany, but even in Russia a similar system has been commenced, the whole of that vast empire has been divided into Provinces, with a University in each; the Provinces again divided into Districts, each of which is provided with a Classical Gymnasium;—each Gymnasial District divided again into School Districts, and in each an Elementary School; so that, as a recent traveller observes, "from Poland to Siberia, and from the White Sea to the regions beyond Caucasus, including the Provinces recently wrested from Persia, there are the beginning of a complete system of Common School Instruction for the whole people, to be carried into full execution as fast as it is possible to provide the requisite number of qualified Teachers."

The investigations on this subject which have for several years past been instituted by our own Imperial Government, have been of the most extensive and practical character, and have already resulted in the adoption of measures unprecedentedly energetic and comprehensive, to supply the intellectual wants of the laboring classes.

The northern States of the neighbouring Republic have also made laudable efforts to improve their systems of Elementary Education; to promote which object, no less than three of their most distinguished citizens have, during the last nine years, made extensive tours in Europe.

But the vast amount of legislation which has been expended in these States, the numerous modifications and amendments of the School Law, the complaints that are still made by the most competent judges and administrators of them, of the defects in their operations,—no less than the nature and importance of the subject itself, admonish, and seem to require on the part of the Government of Canada, the most careful consideration of the whole subject; so that the wants, interests and circumstances of the country may be consulted as far as possible, and that the progress of education may not be retarded by uncertainty, doubt, and frequent change.

The instructions which have been given me, and the facilities of acquiring information with which I have been favored, as well as other circumstances to which I need not here particularly allude, evince that the Canadian Government is second to no other in its desire and determination to promote in every possible way the education of the people.

In obedience then to my instructions, I proceed to the explanation of that system of Education which I