

lated to improve the head as well as the mind—to render knowledge attractive to the scholar, and to facilitate the labour of the teacher; many of the books, indeed, might be read with advantage by children of a larger growth.”

*The School Superintendent of the Victoria District* (WILLIAM HURTON, Esquire,) states:—The improvement from last year has indeed been very great. The number of children attending school has increased ten per cent., and the knowledge acquired, whilst there, has increased fifty per cent. The surveillance of a Superintendent adds a wonderful stimulus to the teacher; and the change from the old hum-drum system to an intellectual one, has done a world of good. The Irish National books too have been very generally adopted; and they cannot be used by any teacher, however dull or stupid, without leading the child to think for itself—to become interested in its work—to read intellectually; and this is the grand point to be attained, to teach the child to think for itself. I have done as much as I possibly could to consign to disuse the unmeaning, and unintelligible, and enslaving columns of the spelling-book, and to show the proper use of those invaluable national books; and I am happy to know that I have been very successful. In my tour this winter (1848) I found fifty of these National books in use where there was not one before, (in 1846); and the sale of them in Belleville has been very large; very much, however, remains to be done, and I have no doubt that under this very Act (if people only have a little patience to allow it to be better understood) those who have interested themselves in the good work of educating the people, will have the satisfaction of knowing that not a single sane adult now under twelve years of age, will in a few years hence be ignorant of reading and writing—the machinery by which to acquire education.”

*The School Superintendent of the Newcastle District* (BENJAMIN HAYTER, Esquire,) observes:—“The schools in this district are being greatly increased, and many of the trustees are actuated by a laudable spirit, and are anxious to introduce the National School Books. Wherever these books are used, great improvement is visible, even in the discipline of the schools.”

*The School Superintendent of the Colborne District* (ELIAS BURNHAM, Esquire) remarks:—“With respect to the state of the common schools in this district, I have the honour to inform you that I regret I cannot speak of any material improvement therein during the past year. But I must, however, bear witness to the desire manifested by all classes of people to avail themselves of the benefits of education, and of their uniform conviction of the advantages of giving their children the means of obtaining knowledge at any cost. The public mind in this respect has undergone a most salutary change during the last four years. The apathy and carelessness which formerly prevailed, have given way to activity and energy; and the prevailing desire now is to extend and advance knowledge, and to instruct and enlighten the rising generation in the principles and practice of a sound education. I augur well for the future. I can discover unmistakeable indications of the right direction of the public mind in regard to schools, and of the necessity of their more general and liberal support; and I feel satisfied that within a very short period, the most gratifying evidences of progress in this respect will mark every part of this fine and rapidly increasing district. During the year 1847, general harmony appears to have prevailed among all the schools of this district,—at least, no complaints were made to me. I look upon this as auguring well for the intelligence and interests of the people. It shows that private differences have been made to give way to the general advantage, and that individual or local prejudices or feelings have not been allowed to mar the prosperity of the schools.—May it ever be so!”

*The School Superintendent of the Simcoe District* (HENRY ADOLPHUS CLIFFORD, Esquire) observes,—“It is somewhat cheering, and prophetic of a better state of things, to compare the present state of schools in this district with that existing six years ago. Then there were scarcely any schools in continuous operation but those in West Gwillimbury and Tecumseth, the two oldest and most wealthy townships in the district, and even in these places much improvement has lately been made; and new, and in many instances commodious, school-houses are springing up in all parts of the country. Neither is there now any uninhabited township without one or more schools, according to its population. The character

of the schools is, in many cases, changing for the better; and I am most happy to say that, among the teachers generally, a great desire for improvement has been evinced. Many of them I believe intend spending some time at the Normal school during the summer; and the advantages to be there derived must eventually be productive of the greatest benefits in all parts of the province.”

*The School Superintendent of the Talbot District* (the Rev. WILLIAM CLARKE) states:—“The National Series of school books are very generally introduced. We have not more than ten thoroughly good teachers who hold general certificates. Hence, I regard the opening of the Normal school as a great desideratum; and trust that, through the providence of God, it will be sustained, and prove a great blessing to the country. To Mr. Robertson (head master of the Normal school) we feel under great obligation for his cheering visit at the close of the year, for the purpose of enlightening us on the subject of teaching; many of the teachers gratefully mention his name.”

*The School Superintendent of the Niagara District* (DEXTER D'EVERARDO, Esquire) concludes his report with the following remark:—“I will avail myself of this opportunity to observe that our schools, as a whole, were never in a more flourishing condition than they are at present.”

*The School Superintendent of the Wellington District* (ALEX. ALLAN, Esquire, A.M.) states:—“Although there is a falling off in some of the townships, yet it is gratifying to find that in the whole District, there is a considerable addition to the number of scholars beyond that of former years, and about one third part more than the increase of the population in 1847. I have likewise to report that the school trustees in general are more desirous to have qualified teachers, and more disposed to pay them better salaries than hitherto. This I consider a matter of great importance to the progress of education in this part of the province.”

*The School Superintendent of the Huron District* thus concludes his report:—“I have great happiness in stating that the common schools throughout this district are fast and greatly improving, and are assuming a totally different character from what they bore some years back. A liberal spirit is generally manifesting itself in school matters, which I trust will not fail to introduce a superior class of teachers. The want of suitable books has hitherto been a considerable drawback, but there is every probability of the difficulty being soon obviated by the liberality of the Municipal Council, which has ordered a hundred pounds worth of the National school books.”

#### XVIII. MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS.

In regard to the various returns contained in this report, it is worthy of remark, that, being *defective*, they exhibit the state of public elementary instruction in Upper Canada somewhat below the reality. Making, however, every allowance for the defectiveness of the returns, the reality is painful and humiliating; and shows how lamentably this most important department of the public service has been neglected in Upper Canada.

2. The facts of this report also show with what readiness and cordiality the great body of the inhabitants of Upper Canada have availed themselves of the first facilities and encouragement afforded them by the Government and Legislature, for the education of their children, and the great advances which have been made in a few years towards the establishment of a general system of common schools. It is likewise very clear from these facts, that the attacks made upon the present school system and law are but the expression of the feelings and passions of individual writers, and no indication of the sentiments and spirit of the country. I have not thought it advisable to protract this Report by any replies to such attacks, consisting, as they have done for the most part, of erroneous representations of both the provisions of the law, and the nature and objects of the system. I have thought it preferable to confine myself to the more legitimate objects of an Annual Report—a statement and exposition of facts—leaving them to speak for themselves.

In this Report I have not specially referred to common schools in Cities and incorporated Towns, as the Act under which they are now organized, or rather to be organized, did not come into operation until the commencement of the current year.

In the Appendix will be found a Circular which I addressed to the Heads of City and Town Corporations on the provisions of