

ceive an education that will fit him for the active duties of life. Nor is it alone in the general education of the people that your hand is seen, but, in extending the facilities for their higher education, your exertions have been rewarded with abundant success.

As the completion of this edifice marks an era in our educational history, the Board deem it not inappropriate to state what has been done by the people of this town in providing means for educating their children. A High School was established in Stratford in the year 1853. At first it was conducted in a small room in the Court House. It was afterwards transferred to the court room, and in the year 1856 removed to the building at present occupied by it, and which was erected at an expense of about \$4,000 contributed by the County Council of Perth. About two years ago this became too small for the increased and increasing numbers of pupils attending it, and it was resolved to proceed with the erection of a building which would give enlarged accommodation, and be a credit, from an architectural point of view, to the town. In this the Board feel confident they have been successful. The plan of the building was prepared, the site, of three acres, was secured, contracts were entered into, and the foundation laid in July, 1878. The cost of the building, site, and furniture will amount to about \$28,000, and an examination will show that it is surpassed in external beauty and internal accommodation by no similar structure in the Province. In this connection it may be stated that the number of pupils at present in attendance at the High School is 140, under the instruction of an efficient staff of teachers—an experienced Head Master and three assistants—and it is proposed shortly to apply to the Government for the recognition of it as a Collegiate Institute.

Nor have the Board been indifferent to the progress of the public schools under their charge. Since the "old log school-house" was taken down, in 1855, the building at present used as a central school and four well-appointed ward school-houses have been erected, at a cost of \$35,000, providing accommodation for 18 departments, and

about 1,000 pupils in which intelligent and painstaking teachers are employed in imparting to the youth of the town an education which will enable them to battle successfully with the difficulties of after-life.

That you, sir, may be long spared to enjoy your well-earned leisure, as well as to witness the continued success of our national system of education, is the sincere wish of every member of the Board.

Dr. Ryerson, who was greeted with warm applause, said he had no words to express the obligations he was under to them. It was thirty-one years since he first visited Stratford in an official capacity. The town was then in its infancy. That which now afforded most satisfaction to him was the intellectual progress which had gone along with its material advancement. He proceeded to dwell upon the excellence of our school system, and acknowledged the obligations he was under to Holland for many of its best features. He pointed to the success of free schools in Ontario, and the steps taken to place the High Schools on a firm and secure footing. He had sought to impress upon the public that every citizen should have a thorough primary education so as to fit him (if desired) for the University. It had been objected that the whole community should not be compelled to support a High School which was only used by a small portion of the community. But it was overlooked that those who sent their children to the High School contributed largely to the support of the Public Schools. It was a noble indication of the intelligence and liberality of the townspeople that they had chosen for their new school the most beautiful site in the town; and the building itself, for beauty and convenience, could hardly be surpassed. He concluded by saying that after thirty years of incessant labour his heart was just as warm in the cause of education as ever, and it gladdened his declining years to witness the success of our educational system—a system whose foundations rest in the hearts of the people and cannot be easily shaken. There was a heart in the people of Canada to carry out the higher purposes of