

for they will acquire that wealth which communication cannot dissipate; that wealth which its possessor may spread and diffuse around, and yet be as rich as ever; that wealth which, if they secure it, will secure to them that happiness and prosperity at home, and that respect abroad, which will always be accorded to an intelligent and high principled people."

WM. MONK, Esq., Master of the Normal School, in a short Speech referred to the arrangements of the School room, and remarked:—"The present may be thought not an unfit opportunity for a few remarks on our School System in general. To institute a comparison between it and that of any of the neighboring Colonies is needless. Indeed the first thing that forces itself on the attention of gentlemen from the other provinces, visiting this, is *the superiority of our System of Education over that which exists in their respective provinces.* But it may not be so generally known, that, in this respect, we can compare favorably with some of the New England States. In visiting the Atlantic cities, we cannot help admiring the number and excellence of their schools and colleges. The schools, even to the very lowest, fitted up in a style of great elegance, and supplied with all appliances necessary to the health and advancement of the children: the Teachers being not only zealous and efficient, but having had an education much above that required for their present situation. Let no one, however imagine that their *country* schools are in anything like a corresponding state of efficiency. To depreciate the institutions of a neighbor, is to me always an ungracious task; and I shall, therefore, confine myself to the mention of one defect, but such an one as will enable you to form a judgment on the matter now under consideration. Within a space of nearly 300 miles, which I travelled in the State of Maine, the schools (except in the towns, in each of which, is always a neat academy), were all alike in this: during the winter months, they are taught by young men who are competent enough, but who, on the approach of summer, betake themselves to some more lucrative employment. After being closed for some time, they are reopened under the management of some aged female, farmer's daughter, or some young woman from a neighboring town, who cannot find any better employment for four or five of the summer months; and thus, the system goes on from year to year. With us, no one can teach without having first undergone an examination, and obtained a license; every engagement must be for 12 months at least, while many of our Teachers remain in the same place for three or four years; and some a much longer period. Of course, our system has not arrived at a state of perfection; it is susceptible of improvement, as all human institutions are. But that we are alive to this fact, is shown by our being assembled here this evening. I repeat it,—the *basis* of our System of Education is sound, without any radical defect, and equal to anything of the kind with which I am acquainted in other countries. This excellence is owing to the liberal footing on which our school System is placed by the Legislature, in the first instance; and, in the next place, to the *impartial* and able manner in which it is administered. Hence it is, that it challenges the support and sympathy of all classes without distinction; and so long as our Act for the Encouragement of Education shall be conceived in the same spirit, and administered with the same impartiality, we shall have little to apprehend for the future of our Island."

The Honble. Mr. COLES, Colonial Secre'ary, in complying with the call of His Excellency spoke in the following terms;—

"Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen—I account this day the proudest of my life; for, in the inauguration of the Charlottetown Normal and Model School, I behold the completion, as a means for the universal diffusion of knowledge among the youth of this colony, of the system of Free Education which I have had the great honour of being privileged to introduce into this my native Island. I cannot but remember, that I had a great deal of trouble in bringing forward and carrying the measure in the Legislature; but I feel myself amply repaid for my labors by the crowning proceeding of this day. Some years ago, but only a short time before I introduced the measure to the consideration of our Legislature, I was travelling in the United States; my aim in doing so being to make myself acquainted, by personal observation, with some of the many innovations or improvements, for which the intelligent and enterprising people of the American Union have, for several years, been so justly celebrated. In the progress of my tour, it was my fortune, when in the State of Ohio, to fall in with a very intelligent gentleman. On one occasion he asked me if I would like to visit their school. In reply, I told him, I would be very glad to do so. Accordingly we repaired to the school; and after having been gratified by an inspection of it. I naturally enquired, how it was supported. To my surprise, my friend said, "there is an old gentleman, who is the proprietor of 8000 or 10000 acres of land in the district, and we contrive to make him pay for the education of our children." On my further enquiring how they contrived to extract so great a boon from the proprietor. I was told it was by imposing a tax upon his land for the support of education. I then enquired, whether parents paid any thing at all in the shape of tuitions fees; and was informed that the only expense falling upon parents besides

the trifling tax upon their own land, was what they paid for books, school stationery, and the finding of fuel; and the great wish of most of them was, that they had more children to receive the benefit of such gratuitous education. The information which I received upon this occasion, at once opened my eyes to what might be done, in a similar way, in this colony; and, from that moment, the idea of preparing, and laying before our Legislature, a measure for the establishment of a system of Free Education throughout the Colony, took fixed root in my mind. In the Legislative Session after my return from the States, the Act of Education then in operation would expire; and, in order that I might have time to perfect my scheme, I succeeded in inducing the Legislature to continue that Act for another year. My intention having become public, there was immediately spread abroad, a report that, for the purpose of sustaining my system, a ruinous tax would be imposed upon the farmers; and, groundless and absurd as it was, it found credence among some of the least intelligent among the people. With a view to counteract the effects of this baseless rumour, I was instrumental in causing the District Teachers themselves to take action upon the subject; I gave them a full exposition of my system, stating to them the probable amount of the salaries which would be received by them, under its operation, and shewing that so light would be the burthen individually imposed upon parents, that it would be fully entitled to the name of 'The Free Education System.' Thus enlightened upon the question, the Teachers returned to their several Districts, and were, I believe, by their faithful representations, the means of leading many who were previously either adverse to, or doubtful concerning the propriety and practicability of the contemplated measure, to comprehend its real merits, and to appreciate, in some degree, the great advantages to the whole community which would result from its being brought into operation. Sufficient for the present to say further concerning the rise, progress, and establishment of the measure, that it was, with the general concurrence of the people, eventually carried triumphantly through the Legislature. I say *triumphantly*, not with reference to any party triumph obtained by its passage; for, greatly to the credit of the Legislature, all parties therein gave their free and full sanction to the principles involved in it, and lent their aid to make it as perfect a measure as possible. Its passage, however, was certainly a *triumph*; but it was a triumph in which all had reason to rejoice; for it was the triumph of intelligence, liberality and progress, over ignorance, error, and prejudice. Some remarks have been made respecting the smallness of the Salaries allowed to our Teachers under the Educational Act. With reference to this subject, I will now observe only, that all our colonial interests have, of late, received a progressive increase, and all our prospects, with regard to the future are cheering and bright: let our district Teachers, therefore, continue to devote themselves faithfully and zealously to the discharge of the important duties of their honorable profession; and doing so, feel satisfied that the community will eventually make them sharers in the fruits of the Island's increasing prosperity.—In the year 1804, the first step towards making some provision for the encouragement of education in this colony, was made by the Secretary of State's giving authority, by a certain despatch to the Governor of the Colony at that time, to appropriate the rent of the Warren Farm, (government property,) towards the support of a school in Charlottetown. But it was not until the year 1819, that a direct appropriation of the rents arising from that farm were made by the erection of the building which yet stands in the front of that in which we are now assembled. Such was the feeble effort at first made for the encouragement of education in the Colony; and, in further tracing the educational movement, so commenced, it would be seen how slowly it progressed; as evidenced by the small annual amounts of the Legislative grants made for a succession of years, in aid of it. In 1808, the legislative grant, for the encouragement of education throughout the Island, was only £327, 6s. 8d.; in 1829, it was £501 19s. 6d; in 1832, £562 10s; in 1839, £605; in 1841, £1271 10s., including the grant to the Academy, in 1845, £1725 2s. 9d., including the grant to the Academy; in 1850, £1824 14s. 8d., including the grant to the Academy; in 1854, £9088 2s. 7½d.; in 1855, £11909 3s. 11d.; and, in the Legislative session of the present year, 1856, the grant was £12000! a most gratifying proof that the wise, enlightened and liberal spirit which operated in the Legislature to the passing of the Free Education Act, in 1852, instead of being diminished in vigor, is growing in strength with the growing financial resources of the colony. Yes, it must surely be truly gratifying to every true friend of the colony to contemplate the high position, to which, from so insignificant a beginning as a paltry endowment of £25 a year, our scholastic establishments have now attained; and that too without the imposition, for their support, of any tax upon the people beyond one half-penny per acre upon their lands, whilst they are, at the same time, relieved from the payment of all tuition fees; and, I may also observe, that at the time the tax was imposed, they were very sensibly relieved, on the score of indirect taxes, by a reduction of one penny a pound on the duty on tea, and of 3s. per cwt. on that upon sugar; so that, it is clear that whilst the great boon of *Free Education* for the rising