

## Educational Intelligence.

## UPPER CANADA.

*Common School Examination and Celebration—500 present.—*

We abridge from a communication in the *Niagara Mail*, the following account of a School Examination and Celebration, which took place in Smithville on the 19th of October, in the Wesleyan Chapel, in consequence of the smallness of the School-house for the occasion:—

"The house was decorated with evergreens of various kinds; the windows were encircled with arches. Above the pulpit was placed a neatly wrought crown, and large wreaths surrounding the entire pulpit and altar and extending across the chapel in different directions, were interspersed with flowers of varied hue. The Ten Commandments in rhyme, together with many significant mottos, occupied the most conspicuous portions of the walls. These highly tasteful decorations were soon ascertained to be the handywork of the ladies, who are ever in advance, for that which is admirable and praiseworthy. The examination commenced at half-past 9 o'clock A. M., and here it would be different to describe the passing scenes before me. The profound interest exhibited by the assembly, in number not less than five hundred, during the examination was gratifying. I regret much that the Provincial Superintendent of Education, and the District Superintendent of Common Schools were not present, to enjoy the truly intellectual feast. The Teacher, Miss Welch, displayed much tact and ability, not less in the thorough investigation of the various educational branches brought before the pupils, than in the vigorous and energetic process of the examination itself. And much credit is due to the pupils, for the prompt and deliberate manner with which they resolved the various problems propounded; and I congratulate the Trustees of the Smithville School Sections, in being so fortunate in securing the services of so competent a Teacher, to take the charge of the intellectual, and moral culture of the children of that Section. At half-past 12 the examination closed. The Rev. Mr. Biggar being appointed Chairman, after making some appropriate introductory remarks, read an able and well written letter, from the District Superintendent of Common Schools in which he expressed regret at not being able to attend the celebration as requested, while at the same time he spoke in high terms of the truly deserved reputation acquired by Miss Welch as a Teacher, while pursuing her profession in the Eastern part of the District. \* \* \* The proper time having arrived for serving the refreshments, I will pass by the luxuries that loaded several large tables, without comment, only turning my attention to the table placed in front of the Speakers, at each end of which was placed a beautiful vase of flowers, and between which were placed the juvenile cakes, with their appropriate and significant mottos, about forty in number. The mottos having been read, the cakes in common with other refreshments, were distributed through the congregation generally. While partaking of these rich refreshments, I was so much amused with the varied emblems and mottos, that the thought occurred to me that it would be no ordinary task to surpass these highly tasteful and original inventions of the Smithville juveniles. The ladies and gentlemen who dispensed to the assembly the many luxuries prepared for the occasion, acquitted themselves with much honour, and all having enjoyed the agreeable repast, the Chairman called the attention of the audience, and in his usual happy manner made a speech that received the hearty approval of all present. Several other gentlemen addressed the meeting, among whom was the Rev. Mr. Price, of St. Catharines, who, in a learned and eloquent manner spoke with special reference to the intellectual and moral culture of the youthful mind. Mr. Editor, I cannot close without especially noticing the Juvenile Choir, in number about twenty-five, assisted by several distinguished adult singers. In conjunction with many appropriate and well-selected pieces, which were sung during the day, I am happy to say, in conclusion, that the delightful exercises were closed, by singing the National Anthem, which was performed with such spirit and such emphasis, that I feel quite certain Her Majesty would have been much pleased in hearing these youths singing a song of loyalty and attachment to the Sovereign of the greatest nation on earth.

W. M. R.

Clinton, October 24th, 1849.

*Progress of the Common School System in the Brock District.*

—We observe in the *British American* an elaborate and admirable Report of the state of Common Schools in the District of Brock, which the Rev. W. H. LAXTON, (the District Superintendent,) laid before the Municipal Council of the District at its Session last month. We are also happy to learn that this excellent document is to be printed in pamphlet form and circulated throughout the District. The inhabitants of that District are to be congratulated in having so able and indefatigable a Superintendent. We extract the following introductory paragraphs from Mr. LAXTON's Report:

"Since the 1st of May, I have devoted a very large proportion of my time to the visitation of Schools. During that period I have visited every

township in the District; personally inspected nearly one hundred Schools; delivered above fifty public Lectures on subjects connected with Common School instruction, and held many private interviews with Teachers, Trustees, Magistrates, Clergymen, and other friends of the young.

"These labors and investigations, though they have been attended with some circumstances and revelations, in particular instances, of the most painful description, have, nevertheless, convinced me, that in a large and general view of the subject, we have good and abundant grounds for mutual encouragement and congratulation; not indeed in any very considerable improvement visible in most of the schools, but in an improved state of public feeling on the subject. Up to a recent period (say the two last years) the people generally, seem to have entered into no enquiries, and to have formed no just conclusion on the subject of Education, or the proper means of imparting it. They seem to think, if they thought at all, that all Schools were equal, and that all Teachers, who could read, write, &c., in a better manner than their pupils, were equally good. The matter of educating children, in their apprehension, consisted simply in sending them to school, where the teacher was expected to preside while the read, recited, &c., a certain number of lessons every day. The qualifications of the teacher were past questioning, if he were only able to read, recite, &c., the same lessons. As to books, it was supposed that any one, or any ten, of the fifty different varieties of Spelling Books in use, with the English Reader, was all that was requisite for the reading classes; while a few treatises on Arithmetic, taken at random from the almost endless variety with which the country was flooded, would supply the means of imparting a knowledge of the science of numbers; and two or three Grammars by as many different authors, would supply material for the grammar class, and complete the stock of text books for the school. Add to these a few slates and pencils, some paper in loose sheets, some steel pens, and some tall narrow phials with ink, and the school was regarded as furnished with all necessary materials for training immortal minds, to all intents and purposes.

"Where such sentiments exist, and while they remain, it will be impossible that any very beneficial results can arise from the schools. In vain may the Legislature provide a School Fund, however munificent, and in vain may our Municipal authorities vote their supplies, however liberal: Our money will be wasted and the time of our youth lost past redemption, until we can impart to the public mind a clearer knowledge of the subject, and a better state of feeling.

"Being deeply impressed with the truth and importance of these sentiments, I have laboured, since I have had the honour to hold my present office, to produce an effect in this direction; and while I have aimed faithfully to discharge those duties of the office more especially required and defined by the statute, I have, nevertheless, considered them all as subordinate, and of inferior importance to that of rightly influencing the public mind. Accordingly, I have availed myself of every opportunity which offered for inculcating right views; by private interviews and conversations with Teachers, Trustees and others, by public Lectures, by an extensive correspondence, and promoting the circulation of such suitable publications on the subject as could be procured; and it gives me great pleasure to observe that these efforts have not been in vain. In a few school sections the people—and in a large number—the Trustees, with some of the leading individuals, are awake; and in many others a state of progress in the right direction is plainly visible, nor have we the least reason to fear but that by kindly and persevering efforts on the part of those entrusted with the management of these important interests, a state of things will shortly arise which will be, in the highest degree, gratifying to every lover of his country and his kind."

*Progress of Common Schools in the Bathurst District.*—Extract of the Report presented by the Rev. JAMES PADFIELD, District Superintendent of Common Schools, to the Municipal Council, at its Session October, 1849.

"The attention of the Teachers to their duties, their success in discharging them, and the progress of the pupils in the Common Schools generally throughout the District, this year, have been very satisfactory. In visiting the Schools I have frequently been gratified with the readiness and accuracy of the scholars in answering the questions put to them in the various studies in which they were engaged. In English Grammar, in Geography, and in Arithmetic, the progress is general, and highly creditable both to teachers and pupils. There is also great improvement in the other branches usually taught; and the friends of the young derive themselves of much pleasure by the infrequency of their visits to Common Schools, which cannot but be regarded as most valuable institutions, well worthy of the deep attention of the patriot and the philanthropist.

"The importance, indeed, of such an elementary course of instruction as is generally pursued in our Common Schools has of late been more duly appreciated than it was some years ago, though by no means sufficiently so yet. There are still too many who lose sight of the great advantages to be derived both by individuals, and by the community at large, from the instructions of the Common School, from securing a judicious selection of Teachers, and providing the necessary supply of books and other school requisites.

"But it is a great point gained to have awakened even so much attention as is now in exercise, to a subject so intimately connected with the well-being of society, as the right education of the rising generation, though much yet remains to be done on all sides for the furtherance of so important an end. Though a more generous outlay is needed on the part of parents and guardians of children; though a better class of Teachers than some of those now employed is desirable; and though a greater degree of attention to the proper construction of School Houses, and to the best modes of fitting them up and furnishing them with the apparatus necessary for the effective communication of instruction is absolutely necessary; yet much has been accomplished during the last three years, and there is promise of still further improvement in many parts of the District."