

There is no reason why our Dominion Government should not emulate so noble an example as the General Government of the United States has set them, and set apart as sacred, out of the magnificent domain now in its possession in the North West, an endowment in Lands which, in after years, would be a noble heritage to the after possessors of the embryo Provinces which are being formed in the Dominion. If Wyoming Territory should in 1868 receive three millions and a half acres of Land as an Endowment for her Public Schools, there is no reason why Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Vancouver Island should not receive at least 2,000,000 of Acres each for the same great national object, and Ontario at least 1,500,000 Acres, in addition to her share in the 1,000,000 set apart some years ago, (1849), through the exertions of the late Honourable W. Hamilton Merritt.

THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN OUR SCHOOLS.

I had intended discussing in this Report some additional matters relating to the well being of our Public Schools, and on which legislation might be desirable. I had also intended referring to two or three points of gratifying interest in connection with our Schools; but having reached the reasonable limits of an Annual Report, I forbear. One point, to which I had desired to refer, was the patriotic spirit of unanimity which pervades all classes of the people in their cordial support of our Public School System, and the other was the pleasing fact of the satisfactory working of the Regulations in regard to the Religious Exercises and Instruction in our Schools. In regard to this latter point, the testimony of the late venerated Bishop Strachan, and of his courteous and venerable successor, Bishop Bethune, that I have done what I could to invest our School System with a Religious character, is especially gratifying to me now, at so advanced a period of my official connection with that System. In his Address at the recent Synod of the Clergy and Laity of the Church of England in the Diocese of Toronto, the Bishop made some kind references to my efforts in that direction. Subsequently, in reply to a Note of thanks which I addressed to him, he said:—

"I have to express my gratification that I had the opportunity to bear my humble testimony to your zealous and righteous efforts to promote the sound Education of the youth of this Province. I believe that, in the endeavours to give this moral and Religious direction, you have done all that, in the circumstances of the country, it was in your power to accomplish."*

My own views as to the possibility of imparting to the daily teaching of the School a Moral and Religious tone, and of the practicability of the Teacher bringing home to the young hearts of his Pupils the glorious truths of our common Christianity, are so admirably expressed by a prelate of the Episcopal Church in the United States, that I insert them in this place. Bishop Whipple, of Minnesota, in a recent Address at an Educational Convention, uttered the following impressive and eloquent remarks:—

*Among his very latest utterances on the Separate School Question in the Synod in 1856 the late lamented Bishop Strachan thus referred to the Head of the Education Department and his labours:—

"One new feature which I consider of great value, and for which, I believe, we are altogether indebted to the able Superintendent of Education, deserves special notice: it is the Introduction of Daily Prayers. We find that 454 [3,366 in 1871] Schools open and close with Prayer. This is an important step in the right direction, and only requires a reasonable extension to render the system in its interior, as it is already in its exterior, nearly complete. But till it receives this necessary extension, the whole system, in a religious and spiritual view, may be considered almost entirely dead. [The increase from 454 in 1856 to 3,366 in 1871 would have gratified the venerable Prelate had he lived.]

"I do not say that this is the opinion of the Reverend Doctor Ryerson, who, no doubt, believes his System very nearly perfect; and as far as he is concerned, I am one of those who appreciate very highly his exertions, his unwearied assiduity, and his administrative capacity. I am also most willing to admit that he has carried out the meagre provisions of the several enactments that have any leaning to Religion, as far as seems consistent with a just interpretation of the School Law."—Charge of 1856, pages 15, 16.