

REPORT

OF THE

SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,

APPOINTED TO ENQUIRE INTO THE

STATE OF EDUCATION

AND THE

WORKING OF THE SCHOOL LAWS

IN

LOWER CANADA,

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.



QUEBEC:

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1852-3.

REPORT

Of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the state of Education in Lower Canada, the working of the School Law, the efficiency of the Education Department in Lower Canada, and the means of rendering more effective the Legislative enactments adopted for the advancement of Education in Lower Canada; with power to send for persons, papers, and records.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE.

Mr. SICOTTE, CHAIRMAN.

The Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL DRUMMOND,

The Hon. Mr. BADGLEY,

Mr. CARTIER,

Mr. POLETTE,

Mr. LACOSTE,

Mr. SANBORN,

Mr. CHAPAIS, and

Mr. CHRISTIE (of Gaspé).

With power to send for persons, papers, and records.

The Committee appointed to enquire into the working of the School Laws, and the means of rendering more effective the Legislative enactments adopted for the advancement of Education in Lower Canada, have the honor to report:—

With the view of obtaining information calculated to shew the state of Elementary Education in Lower Canada, the Committee deemed it their duty to address a series of questions to all the *cures*, ministers of religion, and the Secretary-treasurers of the School Municipalities, touching facts, a knowledge of which might form the basis of statistics both impartial and important, from their exactness. The truth of the facts elicited by the investigation is guaranteed by the control of different authorities acting on the spot. Figures thus obtained have so much the greater value that they represent but generalized facts, which place the questions beyond the reach of idle discussion, or the reports of officers more or less interested, and whose statements are in nowise controlled by the contradiction of independent parties. Your Committee have thought that the duties imposed upon them were not to solicit dissertations on the advantages of education, but to examine in an unprejudiced manner whether the people received, under the operation of the law, that practical instruction adapted to the interests of society.

The information given has the more importance that it only establishes facts the authenticity of which is beyond doubt. The clergy, from its isolation, its independence and zeal, as well as its devotion to the cause of education, was of all bodies of society in the best position to see and judge correctly.

The Committee have examined the Reports of the School Inspectors, and the extracts which they publish completely justify the opinion of your Committee on the working of the School Laws.

On a subject of such vital importance, exaggeration and dissimulation, whether in blaming or approving, are equally dangerous, and the duty of the Committee was to disguise nothing, and to place the facts before this House as they were elicited by the enquiry.

The Committee are forced, from these investigations, to declare that the Elementary School Laws do not work with efficiency, and that the results obtained are far from being as desirable as they ought to be. It is perhaps impolitic to disturb the state of indolence which public opinion at present enjoys, by denying that optimism in which the best thinking men of the country exist. But the too often repeated assertion, that the cause of popular instruction is sufficiently promoted by the opening of a great number of schools, must be judged by the results. A law on education and a state endowment, do not yet constitute education. These two facts constitute a progress, but the organisation may be in some parts defective, and be unavailing, except as regards the putting into execution of the purely material and external part of the system. It is the duty of the Legislature attentively to study the results of the law, and coolly to appreciate its practical importance, to the advantage of the law itself and of its working.

Your Committee have divided their labors, by examining—

1. The state of primary instruction, and the working of the law.
2. The causes which retard and have retarded education.
3. The means to be adopted to render the present law more effective, and to perfect our system of primary instruction.

The answers obtained from more than four hundred persons, on points calculated to determine in a peremptory manner the state of primary instruction establish the following facts:

The number of Commissioners who know how to read and write is only 502 out of 1025, in the Municipalities from which the Committee have received reports; the number of male teachers is 516, and that of the female teachers, 822.

The salaries are apportioned as follows:

Under £10	15
Under £12 10s	45
Under £20	114
From £25 to £40	455
Over £50	40

The age of the female teachers is as follows:

From 15 to 18 years	118
Under 20 years	193
Under 25 years	343

The number of male and female teachers, out of 1991 declared qualified, is 412. The number of children who, since the law has been in operation, have continued their studies in the colleges, is 881.

Out of 1338 Schools, there are maps in 396 only, and globes in a very small number.

Out of 205 Secretary-treasurers of different municipalities who have given in answers, 100, only, declare that the law works more or less well.

Out of 140 Priests whose answers have been received, 20 only make the same declaration for their Parishes.

The number of Model Schools is only 78.

The Superintendent has never, or scarcely ever, visited the schools.

The time occupied by the Inspectors in their visit to a great number of the schools has been a quarter of an hour, or half an hour.

There is no uniformity in the books, and there are often no books.

The teaching varies and changes according to the teachers. There is no method; and the teachers complain that each child brings a different book to school.

There is no management. To do as one pleases is the dominant principle of the whole organisation.

The facts above elicited establish the real state of elementary education, and at the same time indicate the causes which retard it and make it stationary. The working of a law enacted with a view of instructing the people, can only be efficient if directed by men more or less educated. It is impossible for instruction to be serious and progressive where the teachers are perfectly incompetent. So many female teachers of tender years, cannot impart a sufficient and suitable education.

Some School Inspectors thus express themselves on the qualifications of the teachers and the state of education in their districts:

Mr. Lanctot.—"Skilful teachers are to be met with, but they are scarce."

Mr. Bruce.—"The teachers, as a body, are disqualified, and much below Common School teachers."

Mr. Césaire Germain.—"Some years will yet elapse before the law works, for want of teachers."

Mr. P. Hubert.—"Education is backward, and more than three-fourths of the female and male teachers are disqualified."

Mr. Jean Crépaut, after having established that out of 75 schools, 57 are kept by women, adds:—"The three-fourths of the Commissioners are incapable of performing their duty."

Mr. Tanguay.—"There are hundreds of schools in which the children have only learnt, during seven or eight years, to read unintelligibly,—idleness, and sometimes a precocious demoralization. The people who judge by what they see, seeing nothing, have condemned the system. Indifference has succeeded to opposition. People confine themselves to the strict letter of the law to destroy the law."

Dr. Consigny establishes the incapacity of the teachers and the Commissioners, and the little progress that has been made, but hopes that a change will take place for the better.

And with some exceptions, such is the declaration of all the School Inspectors.

The clergy are nearly unanimous in affirming that our School system does not work with success. Out of 140 *curés*, 20, only, declare themselves more or less satisfied with the schools established in their parishes; all the others have unequivocally expressed their condemnation thereof, and with sentiments of regret, becoming men who are sincere friends to education.

The Committee, in specially recommending these answers to the attention of the public, think it proper at the same time to submit some of the opinions expressed by the clergy:

Messire Ls. Proulx.—In the circle in which I am placed, the system of primary instruction does not work regularly and with the desired success, notwithstanding the efforts of honorable and enlightened men.

1. Because there is a contradiction between the principle of the law and the means by which it is put into execution. It is coercive, and its working is confided to the very persons against whom it is enacted.

2. Because the Government has not used its authority in causing the immediate execution of that law. The Superintendent, not receiving the required

reports within the time prescribed, ought to have the power to act without tardiness or hesitation, and without waiting for denunciations which produce nothing but local hatred, systematic and passionate opposition.

3. Because the law, at first declared *permanent*, has been altered in its very essence by subsequent amendments; this indicated a weakness; encouraged ill will, and goaded on to despair the staunch men who had made sacrifices to procure its adoption.

4. Because the law does not contain any clause to put down *extinguishers*, men for the most part covetous and, especially, greedy of popularity, who deceive the people by flattering their prejudices, in order to rise upon the ruin of good men.

5. Because there is a complication of machinery in the execution of such a law; too many commissioners, too many officers, too many elections, and by that means too large a field open for cabal, for local divisions, for the prejudices of ignorance, for the fears of avarice, for corruption, for the convictions of seekers of popularity; too much mechanism in the communications with the Superintendent; the inability of that officer to give legal and definitive decisions on the interpretation of the law, and hence embarrassment, litigation, law-suits, &c., calculated to discourage the Commissioners, and ruin every thing.

6. Because the system of instruction is defective. People want similar schools everywhere. A plan of instruction is filled up, which is forced upon the country parts, as well as on the town, and placed in the remotest corners of the parishes, as well as in the villages, without distinction as to rank, age, sex, fortune, or social destination.

Human society ought to be imbued with the same spirit, as regards its origin and its supernatural end, but not as to the different attributes of the elements which constitute it on the earth. There is then a proportionate number of persons susceptible of less extended instruction, and the remainder, destined to occupy the last step, will have an education which will not exceed reading, writing, and the first elements of arithmetic. A system based on the natural wants of society will succeed, and none other.

Messire Ed. Crevier.—The Circular of the Committee of the House, on elementary education, dated the 30th March, was only handed me this morning.

I hasten to answer it, to satisfy the desire of the Committee. I will then say with candor—1. That I do not think that elementary education progresses with much success in Lower Canada.

1. Because the teachers generally are not sufficiently instructed; they have not been taught to conduct their school methodically; they are generally abandoned to themselves, nearly without surveillance, without good regulations, &c. &c.

1. Because the present school law allows the ignorant, the apathetic, the egotist, and men often who endeavour to do nothing more than to flatter popular passion, to have the direction of elementary education. They are often persons who are in no wise qualified to discharge the important duty which the law confides to them.

Messire Provencal.—There are 14 schools in operation in St. Césaire; 4 in Ange Gardien. They are, in my opinion, far too numerous, being generally so thinly attended. There is but one male teacher. The female teachers in these two school-districts, with the exception of three or four, are little girls, whose education is very imperfect. In consequence, their salary is very limited. It varies from £16 to £30. You may well judge of what education can be when confided to such hands. I desired, and asked for a Model School, without being able to obtain it; our Commissioners being for the most part without education, cannot work efficaciously towards propagating it. Besides I see much indifference and apa-

thy in them. They barely make the visits required by law. The most crying disorders exist in all the school-districts and under the eyes of the Commissioners. It is all the same to them. The number of five is perhaps more embarrassing than useful. Three educated men would suffice for each municipality. There are but a very small number of parishes where such men could not be found; it is not just then to make the majority suffer for the minority. The rate-payers seeing disorder on the one side, and on the other the indifference of the Commissioners, conceive the most unfavorable ideas of education; they are, therefore, loud in their clamours against the system of education. Hence it follows that they cannot have sufficient zeal to send their children to any college. I do not know whether four or five could be found in the large Parish of St. Césaire, who have been sent to college after having attended our little schools, since the existence of the present law. You can readily understand that the answer to your 14th question will be a negative one.

All our schools have been visited by the Inspector, and I believe twice; one half hour, or three-quarters of an hour, was generally the time devoted to each school at each visit.

It is very doubtful whether education has advanced a step through the ministry of the Inspector. With all the good intentions in the world, his powers are too limited to enable him to act efficiently; it is absolutely necessary that he should exercise a control over the Commissioners under the present system. These, sir, are the few remarks which I deem it my duty to submit to your Committee. I communicate them to you, with the desire of seeing the present system of education amended.

Messire Payment.—I am far from being able to tell the Committee over which you preside that the education imparted here is calculated to promote the industrial interests of the country. Apart from reading and writing, the education which the children receive is almost null. I do not pretend to throw all the blame upon the teachers.

If the statistics in my possession do not deceive me, I find that the sums considered as Superintendent's and Inspectors' emoluments amount to £3250. With this sum what has been done? Absolutely nothing in the interests of education. You have had reports, circulars, but all these do not make education advance the least in the world. Let the same sum be given to a minister with well-paid deputies, who will do nothing else but the work they are put to, and I think that matters will go on better.

24. Education proceeds slowly, for the causes above-mentioned; and so long as nothing better is adopted, you will never see the schools turn out any children but such as read badly and write but little.

Mr. P. Pouliot.—Another cause which paralyses instruction is the incapacity and unfitness of those who have the principal control. I wish to speak of the Commissioners. Now, I say that as long as the Commissioners are elective, we shall never have other than incapable Commissioners, even though the law itself should require a literary qualification. For, either means will be found to evade the law if the qualification is not well-defined, or no commissioners at all will be elected. And I do not see in the present powers of the Superintendent any effectual remedy.

If the Honorable Committee wish to discover the cause of this fact, it will be found in the principle of forced assessment. People may talk, write and do as they please, but they will not prevent the generality of the agricultural class from finding the assessment odious. I am not prepared to say as much respecting the other industrial classes. These see in the education of their children personal and direct advantages. Instruction is to them a paternal inheritance. The agricultural class view things in a contrary light, as I have above shewn.

The people, then, regarding the assessment in a bad light, and the promised results having entirely failed, seek to rid themselves of it. How do they do it? by the only means which the law gives them,—that of selecting commissioners having the same ideas as themselves, trying, like them, to prove that the result anticipated by the Legislature in the principle of assessment is fallible.

Your Committee can thus see why commissioners are generally named who are either incapable or known to be opposed to assessment. What do these commissioners do? They follow the letter of the law: they pass by the schools at certain periods; assess the people, and do not levy the assessment, or put it off until their time of office expires, thus leaving the odium of levying it on their successors.

It is easy to see that the assessment, not being paid in time, the teachers suffer from the want of their emoluments, and become disgusted with a profession which is so badly paid. Hence the choice of cheap and consequently incompetent teachers. There is no competition; the salaries are too limited; masters are chosen in the municipality, and advantage is taken of his necessity, to procure his services for a small sum, and of his patience, to make him wait six months for the full payment of his salary. A young girl of fifteen or sixteen years of age, so to speak, is taken from the benches of a small school, and sent with a certificate of morality to the office of the Inspector of the County, and returns with a master-of-arts' certificate. Can the cause of instruction advance under such management?

Messire Papineau.—It is perfectly ridiculous to see the persons whose duty it is to look after the progress of pupils, and to furnish them the means of advancing in the instruction which they receive, incapable of reading or writing, and without any knowledge of the sciences which are taught. How can they favor or judge of a subject which is entirely unknown to them? One might as well call upon a man blind from his birth to decide on the effects of light.

Messire Bélanger.—The law works without opposition, but instruction is not generally sufficiently practical; the sagacity of the children is not sufficiently exercised. Thus they quickly forget the little they know. A child reads five or seven years, without its ever being thought necessary to ask him whether he understands what he reads. Hence his distaste for books. The causes which have retarded and still retard education, are too many different books, consequently too many different classes, and loss of time—want of method, want of books and papers.

Messire Provancher.—No, the system does not work, because most of the schools want books and other necessaries. The salary offered to teachers is too limited to induce sufficiently qualified persons to accept the offer. The nearly absolute want of necessary things in the schools in several school-districts, is the cause that children, often attending schools for whole years, learn hardly anything more than the letter of their catechism.

Messire Déziel.—The first and the principal cause which retards instruction in the municipality, is the want of education in the School Commissioners. The second is the want of method in teaching; and the third, the want in the schools of maps, globes, and some of the most essential books.

Messire Lapointe.—The schools are without books; no maps nor any of those things which are indispensable for the development of intelligence. The schools are empty.

Messire Bedard.—The system does not work in our municipality.

Messire Ls. Parent.—The law has ceased to be in operation for several years.

Rev. — Johnston, Aylmer.—The whole system works badly. The teachers are not paid. Proper books are not to be found in the schools, and general dissatisfaction seems to prevail. I cannot say how far the Superintendent or the

Inspector may be to blame, or if at all. There is, however, something radically wrong somewhere, and incalculable evils are resulting therefrom to our children. Throughout the district, school properties are being alienated, and schooling neglected.

Rev. Henry Roe, Megantic.—Most of the masters are not competent to teach the elements of reading and writing. I am persuaded that there is not a single municipality in Megantic, and very few in the whole county, in which the provisions of the Act are carried out in good faith.

Mr. Crémazie, one of the Board of Examiners at Quebec, in a work of great value, has examined the law on primary instruction, in an extensive and comprehensive manner, by studying it in its principle, in its organization, and in its results. In this memorial which is really important from the practical and comprehensive appreciation of what exists, and of what ought to exist, Mr. Crémazie thus expresses himself on the working of the law: "The Report of the Superintendent for the last six months of 1841, establishes the existence in Lower Canada of 1991 schools. These 1991 schools necessarily suppose 1991 male or female teachers. Since the first July, 1852, all the teachers ought to have obtained a certificate of capacity, after an examination before a board of examiners. Out of this number of 1991 male and female teachers, only 472 male teachers have been admitted to teach by the Board of Examiners, and 23 more must be struck from the number of female teachers on the list of persons licensed to teach. There are then remaining 1590 schools confided to male and female teachers who have not submitted to the examination intended by law. In every system of instruction whatsoever, the efficacious action of the system depends on the qualification of the teachers."

It is impossible not to admit, with nearly all those who have given their testimony, that the school system does not work in such a manner as to give to the youth sufficient instruction suitable to the industrial interests of the country. It is urgent that this state of things should not be allowed to continue for some years more; for it is to be apprehended that the real friends of education, discouraged by an unfruitful labour, will abandon the struggle, and leave the field free to ignorance and careless routine.

The causes which have prevented the progress of education and still retard it, have only to be pointed out to demonstrate at the same time the means which the Legislature ought to adopt to make our school system work with more efficiency, and cause it to produce more generous and satisfactory results. These causes would disappear by the application of new powers organized to control them.

No school system can work well, without an active, energetic, intelligent management, having the right of taking the initiative and of solving all difficulties that occur. A management having but the right to advise, is in Lower Canada an anomaly, and an absurdity. It ought to have the power of enforcing the execution of everything that it advises within the spirit of the law. There ought to be a great deal of coercion in the powers accorded to the management, otherwise it will always go on weakening in public opinion, until it becomes, like the present one, completely inefficacious.

Surveillance ought to exist everywhere, and on the spot. This surveillance ought to be exercised by the Inspectors, conjointly with the local authorities, who ought to control the first, as they ought in their turn to be controlled by the Inspectors. The inspection of the schools by persons who are competent and independent of local influence, is necessary in all good school systems. The Inspectors ought to be less numerous, but better paid and rewarded, to admit of devoting all their time to the duties of their office.

One of the Inspectors ought to be appointed, in each judicial district, president of the board of examiners of such district. These presidents would form with the Superintendent a *Council of Instruction*, whose duties would be to pre-

pare annually statistics on education, to facilitate the working of the law; to prepare modifications which might become necessary; to decide finally all contestations and difficulties submitted to it by the local authorities and occurring between them and the Inspectors. This council ought to meet four times a year, at least, to examine the reports of the Inspectors and local authorities, and deliberate on the interests of education, in order to cause the obstacles to the working of the law to disappear without delay.

The local authorities ought only to be composed of men qualified, by at least an elementary education, and the number of Commissioners ought to be reduced to three.

Normal Schools ought to be opened without delay at Quebec and Montreal, for forming teachers for primary and secondary instruction. It is impossible to anticipate satisfactorily results from any system of primary instruction, if the persons who are called to give instruction are incapable and ignorant. It is the first thing to be done as most indispensable.

Protection ought to be accorded to the teachers for their salary, as well as respects the payment as the sufficiency. Assistance ought to be afforded in old age, to such as have been engaged in teaching for at least 30 years.

Uniformity in the books ought to be imperative, and strictly watched over.

The Council of instruction ought to designate the books to be studied, and be authorized to have them printed either here or abroad. An allowance ought to be made every year for the purpose.

The teaching ought to be methodical, universal, and as laid down in the orders issued by the council, or in the law.

Primary instruction ought to be divided into two categories, or degrees. There ought to be elementary instruction, and above that a secondary one, to serve as a mean, and as an intermission, as the Superintendent has observed, between primary instruction and the education afforded in our colleges.

The elementary instruction would have for its object the regular development of the faculties of man, by a teaching more or less extended of the usual branches of education which are indispensable to all men in society.

The secondary instruction would conduct the child to that point at which he might manifest a particular disposition for classical studies, properly speaking, or for a profession.

The allowance and support now granted by the state for the advancement of education is insufficient. The Committee entirely concur in the opinion of the Superintendent, that new funds ought to be voted. This support is for the interest of all parties, and for the advantage of all origins. The state ought to consider the instruction of the masses as the first want of society. When enormous sums are expended for less general purposes, and for objects of almost trifling importance, a mistaken economy ought not to be used, when the greatest and most universal interests are in question.

The Committee are desirous of preserving organization as the principle of the existing law; in their recommendations and suggestions, they have had in view the perfection and improvement of the present order of things. The details ought to be so modified that without causing the disappearance of a known system, it would receive what is essential and what is wanting, a force of action independent of ill will and of opposition got up by apathy or by ignorance.

Your Committee are convinced that these modifications will ensure to the country serious, solid, practical, and useful instruction.

The whole, nevertheless, humbly submitted.

(Signed,)

L. V. SICOTTE,

Chairman.

Committee Room,

Quebec, 7th January, 1853.

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE.

MONDAY, 7th March, 1853.

THE COMMITTEE MET.

Members present :

Messrs. SICOTTE,
 SANBORN,
 CHRISTIE, (Gaspé),
 POLETTE,
 LACOSTE,
 The Hon. W. BADGLEY,

Read the order of reference.

Mr. Sicotte called to the chair.

Ordered.—That a circular be sent, accompanied by a series of questions, to the different Municipalities of Lower Canada, to ascertain the general opinion on the state of education, the consideration of which is entrusted to the Committee.

Adjourned to the call of the Chair.

MONDAY, 6th June, 1853.

THE COMMITTEE MET.

Members present :

Mr. SICOTTE,
 The Hon W. BADGLEY,
 Mr. CARTIER,
 Mr. SANBORN,
 Mr. LACOSTE.

The report was read, and the Committee concurring therein, ordered it to be submitted to the House.

Ordered.—That the Chairman do leave the chair, and present the said report to the House at its next sitting.

(Signed,) HENRY McCARTHY,
 Clerk to Committee.

APPENDIX TO REPORT.

COMMITTEE ROOM, LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
 QUEBEC, 5th April, 1853.

(Circular.)

SIR,—The Committee appointed to enquire into the state of Elementary Education and the working of the School Act, in addressing to you the following Questions, request you to transmit your Answers thereto at your earliest convenience.

You will please address your Answers to

L. V. SICOTTE, Esquire, M. P. P.,
 Chairman of the Committee.

 QUESTIONS.

1. What is the number of School Masters in your Municipality?
2. What is the number and respective ages of the School Mistresses?
3. What is the salary allowed to each?
4. What is the number of Teachers whom you considered duly qualified?
5. What are the books in use in the Schools in your Municipality?
6. In how many Schools in the Municipality are there maps and globes?
7. In how many Schools has anything else but reading and writing been taught?
8. Have you a Model School, as by law required?
9. Has the Superintendent ever visited the Schools of the Municipality, and how often?
10. Have difficulties arisen between the Commissioners and the Superintendent with respect to the working of the School Act, and were such difficulties settled to the satisfaction of the Rate-payers, and in such a manner as to facilitate the working of the law?
11. Do all the acting Commissioners know how to read and write, and how many of them do so?
12. What is the number of children, who, after having attended the Elementary Schools have continued their education by following a course of studies in a College?
13. Is the Municipality in debt, and to what extent?
14. Does the School system work in your Municipality so as to afford a sufficient education to youth and one suited to the industrial interests of the Country?
15. Has the School Inspector visited all the Schools in the Municipality, and how often has he done so?
16. In the course of his visits, did he examine the Teachers and School Mistresses as to their capacity to teach?
17. Did the Inspector examine the children in the different branches of Education taught them?
18. Did he adopt any measures which have facilitated the operation of the law?
19. Were the accounts of the Municipality examined by the Inspector?
20. How much time did he devote to the examination of each School?
21. Are you of opinion that the appointment of School Inspectors has advanced Education?
22. Are you of opinion that the powers granted by law to the School Inspectors are sufficient?
23. What powers should, in your opinion, be granted to them, with a view to the interests of Education?
24. What are the causes which have retarded and still retard the causes of education in your Municipality?

By Order of the Committee,

(Signed,)

HENRY. McCARTHY,

Clerk to Committee.

Answers of the Reverend Gentlemen, whose names are hereinafter mentioned, to the following questions :

14. Does the School system work in your Municipality so as to afford a sufficient education to youth and one suited to the industrial interests of the Country?

24. What are the causes which have retarded and still retard the cause of education in your Municipality?

Rev. Mr. *Morrison*, (St. Valentin.) The want of books, the neglect of the parents to send their children regularly to school, and the apathy of the teachers.

Rev. Mr. *Dubé*, (St. Martin.) Sufficiently well.

Rev. Mr. *Brunet*, (St. Janvier.) Sufficiently well.

Rev. Mr. *Duquet*, (St. Thérèse.) Sufficiently well; teachers wanting.

Rev. Mr. *Chalette*, (St. Polycarpe.) The want of teachers and qualified commissioners prevents our deriving from the schools all the advantages we have a right to anticipate.

Rev. Mr. *Paradis*, (St. Félix de Kingsey.) It is because the Superintendent who refers us to the Inspector, too fond of his repose and too pusillanimous, has allowed the law to become insperative; and because the Inspector and the Superintendent himself both recoil before the obstacles and the slight oppositions shewn by the people, who have become arrogant through the contempt they have been permitted to evince towards the law.

Rev. Mr. *Crépeau*, (St. Charles.) Well. The cause which has retarded and still retards education is the want of good masters. I think there are too many schools; it would be better to have fewer and better ones.

Rev. Mr. *Maréchal*, (St. Cyrien.) We are satisfied with our schools, and we think it scarcely possible to have a school system affording more advantages, considering the circumstances of the times and of the Country.

Rev. Mr. *Brassard*, (St. Paul.) The School Municipalities considerably retard the cause of instruction. Two good schools well paid and well conducted would afford three times more instruction than is now obtained under the present system.

Rev. Mr. *Harper*, (St. Grégoire.) Yes.

Rev. Mr. *Moore*, (St. Bernard.) No.

The Rev. *Curé* of St. Edouard. No.

Rev. Mr. *Bruneau*, (Verchères.) I do not think so.

Rev. Mr. *Le Maître*, (St. Paulin.) I do not think so.

Rev. Mr. *Trudelle*, (Somerset.) No; good masters and books are wanting.

Rev. Mr. *Muyrand*, (St. Ursule.) I think so.

Rev. Mr. *Guyon*, (St. Elizabeth.) The children leaving our schools are incapable of devoting themselves to any branch of education from the trifling knowledge they possess.

Rev. Mr. *Drapeau*, (Longue Pointe.) Sufficient.

Rev. Mr. *Lemoine*, (Ecureuils.) Sufficient.

Rev. Mr. *Labelle*, (St. Roch.) The want of uniformity in teaching retards the cause of education.

Rev. Mr. *Beaudry*, (Malbaie.) I think so.

Rev. Mr. *Tanguay*, (St. Germain.) "The present system can only work imperfectly, so as to afford to youth sufficient instruction.

"1st. Because its administrators or commissioners are, for the most part, selected from among persons of little education or opposed to the progress of education.

"2nd. Because the system of assessment is the bug-bear of all our population, and particularly of those persons who have no children to educate, or are too distant from the school houses.

"3rdly. Because the teachers, generally too badly paid, perform their duty in return with disgust, with the hope of abandoning it as soon as they see a chance of obtaining a more lucrative situation. The majority become teachers for want of better employment."

Rev. Mr. *Sylvestre*, (St. Dominique.) Yes; the want of money, which prevents the teachers from being sufficiently paid, as the schools are often obliged to be suspended. The Municipal School of the Village is this moment closed.

Rev. Mr. *Boucher*, (St. David.) The school system does not work yet in our Municipality.

Rev. Mr. *Payment*, (Charlesbourg.) "I am far from being able to tell the Committee over which you preside, that the education imparted here is calculated to promote the industrial interests of the country. Apart from reading and writing, the education which the children receive is almost null. I do not pretend to throw all the blame upon the teachers.

"If the statistics in my possession do not deceive me, I find that the sums considered as Superintendent's and Inspectors' emoluments amount to £3250. With this sum, what has been done? Absolutely nothing in the interests of education. You have had reports, circulars, but all these do not make education advance the least in the world. Let the same sum be given to a minister with well-paid deputies, who will do nothing else but the work they are put to, and I think that matters will go on better.

24. Education proceeds slowly for the causes above mentioned; and so long as nothing better is adopted, you will never see the schools turn out any children but such as read badly and write but little.

Rev. Mr. *Télu*, (St. Roch des Aulnets.) I do not think so.

Rev. Mr. *Larouche*, (Little River.) The want of educated teachers.

Rev. Mr. *Duhault*, (St. Hypolite de Walton.) No.

Rev. Mr. *Craig*, (Contrecoeur.) Although the school system works sufficiently well in our Municipality, there is still much to be desired.

Rev. Mr. *Primeau*, (Varennies.) Our schools are sufficient for the society in which we live. There never was in this parish any opposition to the law, but serious difficulties have very often arisen at the election of the commissioners. At these elections the parish was separated into two parties,—one consisting of educated persons and their friends, and the other of the uneducated mass. I could never account for the aversion of good and honest parishioners on this subject against their friends in the village; but with a little more time, our inhabitants will become accustomed to carry on their elections and other school matters with more coolness, and things will go on well.

Revd. Mr. *Cusson*, (St. Antoine.) It grieves me to say that I cannot answer.

Revd. Mr. *Archambault*, (Vaudreuil.) It grieves me to say that I cannot answer.

Revd. Mr. *Beauregard*, (La Présentation.) The results are weak from the want of surveillance. The teachers are left too much to themselves.

Revd. Mr. *LeBrun*, (St. Michel d'Yamaska.) No.

Revd. Mr. *Champeau*, (St. Augustin.) It is not within his province to answer.

Revd. Mr. *Plinguet*, (St. Scolastique.) Very little up to the present time, but we are in hopes.

Revd. Mr. *Dallaire*, (Lacolle.) Yes, but there is a want of uniformity in the system.

Revd. Mr. *Doucet*, (St. André.) Although the present school system produces some good, it cannot be said that it works in such a manner as to afford youth a sufficient education, suitable to the industrial interests of the country. From the too great number of schools arise the too paltry remuneration and the

incapacity of the master, and consequently murmurs are got up, and great disgust evinced towards the schools.

Revd. Mr. *Fortier*, (St. Michel.) Yes.

Revd. Mr. *Brunet*, (St. Damase.) The school system has always worked without opposition in this municipality, but the little time that the children generally devote to attendance at the schools and the difficulty that has existed up to the present time of procuring good teachers, are the causes, I think, which have prevented the instruction from answering either the industrial interests of the country or the expenses incurred for that purpose.

Revd. Mr. *Brassard*, (Longueuil.) Is not a commissioner, and, has been absent.

Revd. Mr. *Desilets*, (St. Guillaume.) No; far from it.

Revd. Mr. *Chauvin*, (Baie St. Paul.) I think it hardly possible that all the schools in a municipality, numerous as they are, can effect this end. I am persuaded that it is only a model school which could completely produce this effect. Though I think that some of the schools of the municipality nearly attain this end.

Revd. Mr. *Tremblay*, (St. Agnès.) Yes, but there are not sufficient schools, from the want of money. There are but two schools, and there ought to be four.

Revd. Mr. *Bailargeon*, (St. Nicolas.) The instruction afforded by the qualified teachers would be sufficient, if the youth would take advantage of it; but unfortunately the children do not follow this instruction sufficiently long, nor attend to it sufficiently regularly.

Revd. Mr. *Beaumont*, (St. Jean Chrysostôme.) We might perhaps wish for more than is to be found in my parish; but time and the good inclinations of my parishioners lead me to hope that every thing will be effected without so frequently altering the laws relating to education.

Revd. Mr. *DeVillers*, (St. Norbert.) The education given in the schools is sufficient. I am of opinion that there are too many inspectors; besides the powers that are given to them, they ought to have the right of naming commissioners in localities which have refused to name any, and of forcing the commissioners of each municipality to make the school laws work.

Revd. Mr. *Archambault*, (St. Hugues de Ramsay.) The system does not yet work in such a manner as to produce sufficient results to promote the industrial interests of the country, but I think that at St. Hugues it works sufficiently well for the time that it has been in operation. "This progress does not yet harmonize with the industrial wants of the country; by no means. But it is a gradual approach to it. It was impossible to proceed faster with the elements and materials at our disposal.

"The present elementary school law is calculated to produce the greatest good, but it will only do so slowly and progressively notwithstanding what may be said by many people whose honesty and sincerity appear to me to be very problematical. The law is good for every one who will fairly put it into execution. If there has not been more progress, that does not depend upon the law, but rather on the people, who are not prepared to derive every thing from it that might be desired. A nation does not hastily pass from infancy to mature age. The vice does not rest in the law, but in the want of aptitude and good will of the people."

Revd. Mr. *Gosselin*, (St. Jean Isle d'Orléans.) Well. The causes which retard instruction lie with the commissioners and the want of assiduity in the children attending the schools.

Revd. Mr. *Poulin*, (St. Thomas.) He hopes that the system will work.

Revd. Mr. *Lévesque*, (St. Marc.) Very well. He recommends rendering the mode of teaching uniform.

Revd. Mr. *Aubry*, (St. Léon.) No. The teachers are not sufficiently paid.

Rev. Mr. *Turcot*, (St. Philomène.) Satisfied. Want of education in the commissioners.

Rev. Mr. *Brassard*, (Coteau du Lac.) I do not think so, the great object for the inhabitants is to have cheap schools. A man who offers himself with the assurance of giving such schools has every chance of being elected. This is the reason why so many *extinguishers* are met with among the commissioners.

Rev. Mr. *Jeannotte*, (St. Mélanie.) It is beginning to do so.

Rev. Mr. *Bélanger*, (St. Ours.) Yes.

Rev. Mr. *Aubin*, (St. George.) Yes.

Rev. Mr. *Besserer*, (Ste. Famille.) He answers that it is the indifference of the people who cannot appreciate what they do not know, and imagine that their children will not follow any other mode of living than that of cultivating the soil; according to their notions it is throwing away trouble and money to acquire knowledge which will soon be lost by the continual occupation in field labor.

Rev. Mr. *Marcoux*, (St. Régis.) Well. One of the principal causes which retard the perfect operation of the law, is the want of instruction in the Commissioners.

Rev. Mr. *Matte*, (Ste. Hélène.) To this I answer emphatically, no! What retards education is the want of money and of educated teachers.

Rev. Mr. *Faucher*, (Lotbinière.) The principal causes which have retarded education have been the want of means to pay good masters, the want of books, the want of masters, the want of education generally among the Commissioners.

Rev. Mr. *Béland*, (St. Rémi.) The same reasons.

Rev. Mr. *Dufour*, (St. Zotique.) In three schools out of five.

Rev. Mr. *Naud*, (St. Laurent.) Well.

Rev. Mr. *Portier*, (Pointe aux Trembles.) Well.

Rev. Mr. *Delage*, (Islet.) No.

Rev. Mr. *Beaudry*, (St. Jean Chrysostôme.) Much is wanting.

Rev. Mr. *Provençal*, (St. Césaire.) "There are 14 schools in operation in St. Césaire, 4 in Ange Gardien. They are in my opinion far too numerous, being generally so thinly attended. There is but one male teacher. The female teachers in these two school-districts, with the exception of three or four, are little girls, whose education is very imperfect. In consequence, their salary is very limited. It varies from £16 to £30. You may well judge of what education can be when confided to such hands. I desired and asked for a model school, without being able to obtain it; our Commissioners, being for the most part without education, cannot work efficaciously in propagating it. Besides, I see much indifference and apathy in them. They barely make the visits required by law. The most crying disorders exist in all the school-districts and under the eyes of the Commissioners. It is all the same to them. The number of five is perhaps more embarrassing than useful. Three educated men would suffice for each Municipality. There are but a very small number of Parishes where such men could not be found. It is not just then to make the majority suffer for the minority. The rate-payers seeing disorder on the one side, and on the other the indifference of the Commissioners, conceive the most unfavorable ideas of education, they are, therefore, loud against the system of education. Hence, it follows that they cannot have sufficient zeal to send their children to any college. I do not know whether four or five could be found in the large Parish of St. Césaire who have been sent to college after having attended our little schools since the existence of the present law. You can readily understand that the answer to your 14th question will be a negative one.

"All our schools have been visited by the Inspector, I believe twice; one half hour or three quarters of an hour was generally the time devoted to each school at each visit.

"It is very doubtful whether education has advanced one step through the ministry of the Inspector. With all the good intentions in the world, his powers are too limited to enable him to act efficiently; it is absolutely necessary under the present system, that he should exercise a control over the Commissioners. These sir, are the few remarks which I deem it my duty to submit to your Committee. I communicate them to you with a desire to see the present system of education amended."

Revd. Mr. *Trahan*, (Shipton.) "I must declare to you that I am totally incapable of answering the different questions contained in your letter. In the five Townships in which I officiate, which are Ely, Melbourne, Shipton, Windsor and Tinwick, I do not know of one single catholic school; but I can assure you that in several parts of these Townships, the school law is very badly executed, for instance, in the upper part of Melbourne and the adjacent part of Ely, where there is yet no school, although means would not be wanting if these places were visited and organized. In the upper part of Shipton, there is no school either, and a certain Commissioner or delegate who neither knows how to read or write, collects assessments from the inhabitants in Tinwick; the Township is a catholic one. There are certainly 300 children capable of attending school and waiting to do so. There is not a single school. Now as to the visit, I shall not say to the schools, for there never have been any, but to these places, I remember having met last summer one of the Inspectors who told me he was on his way to visit Tinwick in order to organize schools there—it was the first time I had seen a school Inspector in the Townships. At present I do not know what he said and much less what he did—for the school system always works in the same way, that is to say, that there is no school in the different places already mentioned in this communication."

Revd. Mr. *Quintal*, (St. Luc.) By no means. Absence.

Revd. Mr. *Belle-isle*, (St. Hémédine.) Says that the causes which retard education are the want of instruction in the teachers, the low salary which is allowed them, the little zeal shewn by the Commissioners, of whom it may be said that the majority have no education and that they do not know how to appreciate its benefits.

Revd. Mr. *Dorion*, (Drummondville.) "The causes which in our Municipality have retarded the cause of instruction are:

1. "The difficulty of collecting the money by law authorised to be levied for School purposes;

2. "The opposition shewn by certain rate-payers to the School Law.

"In our Municipality the number of non-resident proprietors is considerable. There are even a great many lots of land the proprietors of which are not known. These proprietors reside in different parts of the country, in different districts, some even out of the country, so that it becomes nearly impossible to levy the amount of the assessments due by some of them, and they can only be obtained from certain others a long time after they are due. It is easy to imagine the expenses, the proceedings and the delays occasioned by suits before different Courts and in different districts, when it is necessary to have recourse to them. Sometimes the different sums due by each are so small, taken separately, that it is not thought expedient to take legal proceedings to recover them. Sometimes it is impossible to do so; under the provisions of the present law a suit cannot be instituted for the recovery of a sum less than £10 when the prosecution would carry with it the sale of immovable property, and this is always the case when necessary to sue a person who does not reside in the country. In this case the judgment cannot be executed until the lapse of five years from the time the amount demanded has become due. It is then impossible to levy the assessments in proper time. On the other hand the Government grant has not exceeded for some

years, the sum of £40, in our Municipality. The law does not permit us to levy more than 15 per cent. more than this sum. The 15 per cent. does not meet the expenses of collection, and, as a great number of absent proprietors do not pay us, we are left with less than £80 to meet the expenses incurred by keeping up six or seven schools. It is then necessary to establish a higher monthly rate than would be done if all the money due was obtained in proper time. This occasions other inconveniences which I shall notice hereafter. When it is necessary to levy a sum of money for building Schools there is no other way of supplying the deficiency occasioned by absentees (and from whom the amount cannot be obtained in advance) but to impose a new assessment, and this can only be effected to the great displeasure of those who have already paid. I said that the opposition of certain rate-payers prevented the law from operating with efficacy. These opponents are composed of two different classes, viz. certain rich proprietors, and the poor. The first oppose the law because they are assessed for School houses and for the payment of the salary of the teachers, whose services they do not sometimes avail themselves of, and consider themselves badly treated. This class of opponents is composed of a very small number, of a few individuals (perhaps of one alone.) They rely for support upon the poor class and some discontents of the middle classes; as the poor oppose the law because the obligation they are under of paying for each of their children between 7 and 14 years of age, is an onerous charge to them; I speak here of the poor who cannot be classed among the indigent, because they are proprietors. As I have already above observed, a great number of the owners of real estate do not pay, it is necessary to make up the deficiency by raising the monthly allowance, thus giving rise to discontent. Certain families are so remote from the School houses that it is impossible for them to send their children, and nevertheless it is not in the power of the commissioners to exempt them from the payment of the monthly rates; how can these persons be obliged to pay a higher rate than would be necessary if all paid punctually to supply the deficiency occasioned by absent proprietors; this is a just subject of complaint.

“In conclusion, I will say that the school system works at present in our municipality, but not without causing much trouble and embarrassment to the commissioners. If our School Commission continues to be composed of commissioners, the majority of whom sincerely desire the working of the law, the system will continue to work well, but it is to be apprehended that the opposition will succeed in introducing into the commission a majority of members unfavorable to the cause of education. The opposition was extremely active at the last election.”

Rev. Mr. *Archambault*, (St. Thimothé.) I do not think so.

Rev. Mr. *Demers*, (St. Denis.) I do not think that the School system works in such a manner as to give to the youth an education sufficient for the industrial interests of the country; all these very young female teachers do not inspire sufficient respect to the parents or to the children.

Rev. Mr. *Grenier*, (St. Henri.) In some schools.

Rev. Mr. *Pouliot*, (St. Irénée.) The system works sufficiently well.

Rev. Mr. *Crevier*, (St. Marie de Monnoir.) It might and ought to be better.

Rev. Mr. *Pelletier*, (Isle aux Coudres.) I must certainly confess that the school system does not work here, and generally in other places, so as to afford sufficient instruction. Experience shews me children leaving the schools, and still incapable of appreciating education, returning to their parents, with a little knowledge of reading, and that is about all.

Rev. Mr. *Roy*, (Trois Pistoles.) Sufficiently well. Apathy.

Rev. Mr. *Duguay*, (St. Flavie.) No school-houses.

Rev. Mr. *Beaumont*, (Beaumont.) Will not answer, to avoid accusation.

Rev. Mr. *Parant*, (St. Jean, Port Joli.) The law has ceased to be in operation for several years.

Rev. Mr. *Laroque*, (St. Johns.) "Since I received from the committee appointed to enquire into the state of elementary education, a series of questions, accompanied by a letter from the Secretary of the Committee, requiring the answer to be directed to the Chairman of that Committee, it has been impossible for me to pay attention to the matter and to give my answer. If the Chairman had not been an old acquaintance of mine, and in consequence entitled to special attention on my part, I would certainly have determined upon not giving any answer to these questions as well as to the letter that accompanied them. If you will take the trouble of examining some of the questions and particularly those which terminate the series, you will at once perceive that there would be some danger for me as well as for any other *cure* of seriously wounding certain officers of the School Law, if we had to declare against them or against the utility of the office they may have to fulfil. This reason will suffice, I hope, sir, to make you understand why I shall content myself with addressing you the present as my answer, as I do not believe that I am rigorously bound to give another in conformity to the desire of the Committee."

Rev. Mr. *Mignault*, (Chambly.) Satisfied.

Rev. Mr. *Bernier*, (St. Anselme de Lauzon.) Content.

Rev. Mr. *Racine*, (St. Joseph de Beauce.) Pretty well.

Rev. Mr. *Tardif*, (St. Pierre, Isle d'Orleans.) Pretty well.

Rev. Mr. *Langevin*, (St. Claire.) Pretty well.

Rev. Mr. *Destroismaisons*, (St. François.) No.

Rev. Mr. *Trudel*, (St. Isidore.) I think it would not become me to establish myself as a censor of these officers by answering certain questions.

Rev. Mr. *Cloutier*, (Cacouna.) The causes which retard instruction are the want of money to procure better educated teachers, the want of books, maps, paper, &c., and in a word the want of assiduity in the children in attending the schools regularly.

Rev. Mr. *Leduc*, (St. Joachim.) Yes.

Rev. Mr. *Bégin*, (Rivière Ouelle.) Since the last six months of 1849, the schools have only worked voluntarily, and contrary to the 4th clause of the 12th Vict., chap. 50.

Rev. Mr. *Chartand*, (St. Clément.) Refuses to answer, because he says that it is not within his province to watch over the officers appointed by the Government to make the school laws work.

Rev. Mr. *Chartier*, (St. Gilles.) We are beginning.

Rev. Mr. *Gingras*, (St. Bazile.) I do not think so.

Rev. Mr. *Gingras*, (Percé.) My opinion is that the school laws will never work here.

Rev. Mr. *Désjardins*, (Grande Rivière.) The system does not work.

Rev. Mr. *Gagnon*, (Chicoutimi.) No.

Rev. Mr. *Dostie*, (St. Stanislas.) Certainly not.

Rev. Mr. *Gastépy*, (St. Anne.) I cannot say.

Rev. Mr. *Suzor*, (St. Christophe.) Not at all.

Rev. Mr. *Clément*, (St. Urbain.) I cannot answer on that head.

Rev. Mr. *Hébert*, (Kamouraska.) No, not altogether; from the incapacity of the teachers for many years, bad choice made of Commissioners who are either interested merchants or ignorant farmers, enemies to education.

Rev. Mr. *Côté*, (St. Geneviève de Batiscan.) Yes if we wish to avail ourselves of it.

Rev. Mr. *Kyrouac*, (Cap de la Magdeleine.) The school system works but very slowly; the causes which among others retard instruction are the want of education in the Commissioners, — the small salary allowed the teachers.

Rev. Mr. *Parant*, (Chateau Richer.) Yes.

Rev. Mr. *Lavoie*, (St. Vincent de Paul.) Yes.

Rev. Mr. *Manseau*, (Industry Village.) The school system works rather imperfectly, except in the Model School kept by the Frères.

Rev. Mr. *Bernier*, (Halifax.) Yes.

Rev. Mr. *Paradis*, (Pointe du Lac.) It is doubtful.

Rev. Mr. *Refour*, (Milton.) The system does not work in our Township in such a way as to give a sufficient education, suited to the industrial interests of the country, for there is not one child among those who have attended our schools who is capable of writing a tolerable letter or of drawing up a simple note, or keeping according to rule a small journal of receipt and expenditure. Notwithstanding that we have had schools for a long time, I think it would be better not to have any than to have them so badly kept and so badly conducted. The children make no progress, and we spend, uselessly, considerable sums and get up an infinite number of difficulties and troubles.

Rev. Mr. *Milette*, (St. Augustin.) The system does not work in this Municipality so as to afford sufficient education, suitable to the interests of the country. For my part I attribute the cause less to the law than to the need which the farmers generally have of their children's services to assist them in their labours.

Rev. Mr. *Laporte*, (St. Ambroise de Kildare.) The instruction which the youth receive here, though in only one of the schools of this municipality, is, in my opinion, sufficient for the mass of the population.

Rev. Mr. *Pelletier*, (Stanford.) "To this question, I reply in the negative."

Rev. Mr. *Caron*, (St. Joachim de Chateauguay.) "I beg of you not to take it amiss that I do not answer the questions you have addressed me as Chairman of the Committee on Education, for not having been a School Commissioner for several years, I am not supposed to be acquainted with, and to know several of the matters on which I am questioned, because however good the intention which I ought to suppose exists in the Committee of the House, would it not compromise us (the Clergy) to answer several of the said questions; would it not be playing an odious part to become the censors of the officers appointed by the Government to make the school laws work, which would be the case if we answered all the questions which have been addressed to us, and might be productive of unhappy results to us. Believe then, sir, the regret I experience in being unable to conform to your wishes."

Rev. Mr. *Prout*, (St. Philippe.) The school system works tolerably; and I think it will afford to the youth an education sufficient for the interests of commerce and the trades.

Rev. Mr. *Caron*, (St. Frédéric.) My answer to this question is in the negative; if we have not the satisfaction of seeing education progress according to our wishes, we have at least the consolation of seeing the children of our good farmers sufficiently instructed to learn their religion and make good citizens.

Rev. Mr. *Desautels*, (Rigaud.) "I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 30th March last, in which you transmit me questions on the part of the Committee appointed to inquire into the state of elementary education, and the operation of the School Laws in my parish. As it is not part of my duty to watch over the officers appointed by the Government to make the School Laws work, you will not take it amiss that I do not answer the said questions, and I beg of you to inform the Committee over which you preside, of the regret I experience in being unable on this occasion to conform to its wishes."

Rev. Mr. *LeBlond*, (Rivière des Prairies.) Yes, since this autumn.

Rev. Mr. *Vinet*, (Sault au Récollet.) Regrets that he cannot answer.

Rev. Mr. *Côté*, (St. Ferréol.) In reply to the letter which you did me the honor to address me, dated the 26th March last, I beg to inform you that not

having one single school in my parish, I cannot give my opinions on the questions you have addressed me; as I have only been *curé* of St. Ferréol since last autumn, I do not yet exactly know what prevents the putting into operation of the School Law here.

Rev. Mr. *Pepin*, (Boucherville) I think that the school system affords a sufficient education to youth.

Rev. Mr. *Bedard*, (St. Raymond). Negatively, and for certain reasons.

Rev. Mr. *Vinet*, (St. Constant). The school system would work very fairly if the children attended the schools more regularly.

Rev. Mr. *St. Germain*, (St. Laurent). I think that the school system works in this municipality in such-a manner as to give sufficient instruction to the youth who wish to place themselves in a position to profit by it.

Rev. Mr. *Asselin*, (Ange Gardien). We cannot think that the system here affords an education suitable to the industrial interests of the country, but it may to individual interests. The causes which retard instruction are the apathy of the parents and the occasional incapacity of the teachers, for if we are well provided with teachers during certain years, we are badly off during others.

Rev. Mr. *King*, (St. Sylvester). No.

Rev. Mr. *Russell*, (Buckingham). The unsuccessful operation of the School Act here, is principally the result of three distinct causes: the opposition of persons of influence; the ambiguity of the Act; the apathy of the School Commissioners, who commit wilful blunders, calculated to defeat the object of the Act.

Rev. Mr. *Kemp*, (Lingwick). The school system has hardly been tried here.

Rev. Mr. *Brady*, (Buckingham). The school system does not work well.

Extracts from answers given by the persons whose names are hereinafter mentioned, to the questions of the Committee.

J. Olivier Arcand, Esquire, (St. Michel d'Yamaska).

Answer to Question No. 14.—We may say that the school system does not work at all here, so that the children remain without a sufficient education, suitable to the interests of the country.

Answer to Question No. 24.—The causes which have retarded and still retard education in this municipality proceed therefore from the fact:

1. That the Government has voluntarily and knowingly honored the opposition, and humiliated the friends of order and of the working of the law.

2. That the Superintendent has too much given as an excuse the incapacity of the School Commissioners, in order not to use with energy the powers the law gave him in all the cases where the School Commissioners could not or would not surmount the obstacles which arose to the execution of their duties. He may say as much as he pleases that he could not be everywhere. A good general ought to show himself at the most threatened points of the territory the defence of which is confided to him.

The Honorable *D. B. Papineau*, (Petite Nation):

Answer to Question No. 14.—From reasons and from circumstances which it would be too long and perhaps useless to assign here, I ought to observe that it is scarcely little more than a year that we have been able to overcome the prejudices of the majority of the inhabitants of the municipality, who were much excited and disturbed by persons who are altogether strangers, and who made a point of coming there and creating an opposition. It is only recently that the well-disposed persons have succeeded in obtaining a slight majority, favo-

nable to the present system, and in making the law work. But as this majority wish to bring over the minority, little by little, to more healthy views, they display their prudence in not wishing to exercise all the rigor of the law. They must not be blamed. The present system would be nearly sufficient if it were put into execution with zeal. It appears to me that to be a School Commissioner under present circumstances, no one ought to be eligible as such, unless he knew how to read and write properly, and unless he first bound himself in writing to maintain the present system with all his power. The penalties imposed by law against negligent commissioners, or representing either a majority or a strong refractory minority, can never compensate for the want of zeal.

Answer to Question No. 24.—There is no cause peculiar to this locality, other than that mentioned in the answer No. 14, which appears to me to have embarrassed or to embarrass at present the cause of education. But there is a general cause, the effects of which will still exist for some time, to which may be attributed the present slowness in the progress of elementary education. It is the nearly absolute ignorance of the mass of the people, caused by the sectarian policy and avowed proselytism of the administration of the Provincial Government, from the cession of the Province by France to Great Britain up to 1825. How could the descendants of four generations of men, kept in ignorance, know the advantages of education? How can they be induced to make the necessary and indispensable sacrifices to obtain a thing of which they do not know the want, of which they do not feel the utility? Without otherwise incriminating a deplorable state of things, but which does not now exist, we must limit ourselves to repairing the evil. It is only time, patience, and larger grants from the public treasury than those that are now made that can remedy it, and put an end to a state of ignorance of which the population themselves are not the cause.

When we consider that before 1832 the annual expenses incurred by the Province of Lower Canada, have sometimes exceeded £80,000 for the encouragement of education; that since then, the population has more than doubled; that since the union of the two Canadas, the allowance for elementary education is but £50,000 for the two Provinces united, can it be a matter of surprise to us that the purely legislative provisions on this so important subject have not produced more advantageous results.

J. Bte. Desrosiers, Esquire, (St. Hugues):

1. The system of primary instruction, although it has not yet attained the object held in view by the legislators and the friends of education, has nevertheless, in the greatest number of localities, produced results sufficiently satisfactory to make us augur well for the future. The opposition to the law does not certainly proceed from a defect in the law, and ought not to prevent our seeing it work with full success when the popular prejudices shall have all been done away with.

2. In casting a glance on the past, we have seen that in the places where the first citizens have employed their influence in aid of the cause of education, there it has done good and promised much; and also that in the places where the opposition to the law has been most strong and most general, we have been able to discover that the bad popular passions have been worked upon by certain individuals who used that means to acquire popularity. Our primary schools have then, for the most part, done what they could do under the circumstances in which the people were; who, deprived of the means of appreciating education, had, besides, the greatest repugnance towards a direct tax, which they considered to be the commencement of a more extensive system. Happily this error has entirely ceased to exist.

There was also great difficulty in procuring teachers sufficiently qualified to teach. This difficulty is still felt.

3. I consider that our primary schools, well directed, kept by well qualified teachers, and watched over by inspectors, who know and understand how to perform their duties; all this added to a Model School established in each parish; in fine, that the present School Laws, well understood and carefully carried into operation, would give us a sufficient system of instruction.

J. B. DESROSIERS.

Extract from the Memorandum addressed to the Committee by J. Crémazie, Esq., (of Quebec) in answer to their questions.

The report of the Superintendent for the last six months of 1851, establishes the existence, in Lower Canada, of 199 schools. These 1991 schools necessarily suppose 1991 male or female teachers. Since the first of July, 1852, all the teachers should have obtained a certificate of capacity, after having at first undergone an examination before a Board of examiners. Out of this number of 1991 teachers, 472 male teachers, only, have been admitted to teach by the Board of Examiners, and then we must deduct from this number 23 female teachers who are on the list of those licensed to teach, furnished by the Superintendent. This leaves, then, 1519 schools confided either to female teachers who have not undergone the required examination, or to female teachers whom the law, through the gallantry of the Legislature, has exempted from this examination.

In any system of instruction whatsoever, the efficacious action of that system depends on the qualification of the teachers. As I do not know any thing of the teachers out of the District of Québec, I shall confine myself to that District. Are all the teachers of the District of Québec equally qualified to discharge the important duties confided to them? I do not think so; and I will say why I do not. According to the report of Dr. Meilleur, there are in this District 524 schools under the direction of male and female teachers. What is the number of the one and of the other? I cannot say. But it is an ascertained fact that in this same District, 115 teachers have received certificates of capacity from the Board of Examiners. With very few exceptions, these teachers presented themselves before the Board a little before the first of July, 1852, and a great number after that time. As a member of that Board, I can state that the examiners found themselves in a very embarrassing position with regard to these teachers. It was necessary either to conform strictly to the requirements of the law and refuse the majority of candidates the requisite certificate of capacity, and in that case close a great number of schools, or else shew more indulgence and admit as qualified persons who were really not so to the extent intended by the law. A great responsibility, in the one and the other alternative, attached to the Board who thought, under the circumstances in which the District was placed, that it was better to allow the order of things existing under the authority of the law for eight years, to remain as it was, than suddenly to overthrow everything by disqualifying the teachers who were exercising their functions with the sanction of the school authorities.

There are then remaining 409 schools, confided to male teachers unprovided with certificates of capacity, or to female teachers. This number is enormous, as it forms about the four-fifths of the whole of the schools of the District. Although there are a certain number of teachers not yet approved of by the Board of Examiners, it is to be presumed that nearly three-fourths of these 409 schools are under the direction of women or of young girls whom the School Commissioners generally prefer to male teachers, because *they cost less*. It is not necessary for

me to remark that the number of female teachers engaged, from motives of cheapness, is sufficient to establish, at least morally, that primary instruction cannot work with success in our District. As every system of instruction owes its efficacy to experience, to capacity, to practice in teaching, the knowledge of bad and good inclinations, and of the defects of childhood, to the firmness, the prudence and the judgment of the teachers, is it possible, is it usual that young girls, like the majority of the female teachers, having just left the forms of a school to take charge of a task so difficult and so troublesome as the instruction and the education of youth, can possess all these indispensable qualities, still more indispensable when boys are to be taught? But what is more: a great number of boys' schools are kept by young girls; boys of 12, of 14 and even 15 years of age, and more, attend these schools. Now, I ask, is it probable that such a state of things can produce advantageous results? For my part, I think that instruction gains but little, and morality perhaps still less.

The principal causes which have retarded and still retard the cause of elementary education are, 1. the ambiguous and incorrect manner in which the elementary school laws are drawn up; their complication, and the absence of order and method in their provisions; they contain important omissions which paralyze their effect if they do not destroy it altogether. In proof of my allegations on this point, it is only necessary to refer to the contradictory decisions of the tribunals, the various opinions of lawyers, the difficulties and the numberless law suits to which they have given rise.

And, as if to assist chicanery, these laws shew a superfluity of ambiguous ill-defined formalities, which throw the persons acting under them, into doubts, difficulties and embarrassments of all kinds, which even paralyze and nullify the zeal of the warmest friends of the cause. It is true that the law of 1849 has done away with the appeal and the *certiorari*; but if the right of pleading from tribunal to tribunal is diminished, the obscurity of the law is still the same.

2. Another cause, is the omission of every provision for the formation of teachers, to regulate and fix on a suitable scale the allowance which ought to be made to them. "The means," says Mr. Ryerson, "of obtaining good teachers, is to establish Normal Schools." If ever a country was in want of efficient teachers it is, without contradiction, Lower Canada. Up to the present day, a position so noble, so important, so indispensable as that of the teacher, has been so underrated, so much looked upon as the lowest of all the numerous professions which are practised in our country, that few persons worthy of fulfilling the duties have been found to embrace it. There are nevertheless, educated young persons, who, notwithstanding the contempt to which the teacher seems doomed, have had the generous courage to enter a career so ungrateful, so painful and so badly remunerated as that of teaching. They have made a noble sacrifice; I even say that they have performed an act of philanthropic heroism. To their elevated minds the sweetest recompense of their labours, of their life of privations, is the consciousness of discharging the most noble and the most useful of duties, (after that of the priest,) towards their fellow citizens; that of consecrating their best days to the formation of the mind and heart of the rising generations. But the number of these worthy teachers is infinitely small; and rationally speaking, it would be requiring too much from human nature to expect that a great many others will adopt them as their models. Except these men devoted to the common good, let us go through our country parts and see how many competent teachers we can find. If we wish to form an idea of the capacity of the teachers of the District of Quebec, let us look at the tables of admissions to teach made by the Board of Examiners; out of 122 certificates granted by this Board, there are only 12 for superior schools and 6 for academies, and this District possesses 524 schools, scattered over more than 100 parishes! In the Dis-

trict of Montreal, out of 349 certificates, there are only 4 for academies and 34 for model and superior schools; in the whole 471 certificates have been allowed, and of this number there are 415 for elementary schools.

The law should have provided means for forming masters, by establishing from the commencement several Normal Schools, for the instruction of those who intended to devote themselves to teaching. This law, passed in 1846, provides for the examination of the qualifications of teachers; but it ordains at the same time, that this examination shall only take place in ten years. Since, (in 1849,) this period has been limited to 8 years, that is to say, to the 1st July, 1852. To give to this enactment all the desired effect, the school commissioners are ordered not to engage any teachers after this period, but such as are provided with certificates of capacity; a provision which the school commissioners have evaded, by engaging women or young girls as teachers whom the law exempts from the formality of an examination. The legislator, by putting off to such a remote period the examination of the qualification of the teachers, understood then the necessity of this examination; and in order not to leave Lower Canada without school masters by giving immediate effect to this provision, he granted a sufficient time (eight years,) to permit the teachers to become capable of undergoing the required examination. This was very proper; but an important thing was forgotten, which was indispensable for the good results of this provision, namely, that rational and methodical teaching did not exist in Canada; it had yet to be created: that in order to create it, it was necessary to form establishments in which those who intended to devote themselves to teaching might learn the theory and the practice of this difficult art. Thus it happened that at the expiration of the period fixed, the teachers, without any pecuniary means, without any one to form them or at least to guide them in the important studies which teaching requires, presented themselves—with few exceptions, little better prepared to undergo the required examination than in 1846—so that eight precious years have been lost to education and the Normal Schools which ought to be one of the fundamental bases of the system of public instruction, will have to be established for the first time in 1853.

The absolute and indispensable necessity of creating Normal Schools for the purpose of forming masters capable of teaching, has been acknowledged at a rather late period. The art of teaching is more difficult than is generally believed: it is the result of particular studies and practice; it depends, for its efficacy, on the method of teaching. Now, it is only in the Normal Schools that all the necessary attainments for this art can be acquired.

M. Guizot said, on introducing the Law of Primary Instruction to the Chamber of Deputies: "All the provisions hitherto described *would be of none effect*, if we took no pains to procure for the public School thus constituted *an able Master, and worthy of the high vocation of instructing the people*." "It cannot be too often repeated, that *it is the Master that makes the School*."

"What a well assorted union of qualities is required to constitute a good Master! A good Master ought to be a man who knows much more than he is called upon to teach, that he may teach with intelligence and with taste; who is to live in an humble sphere, and yet have a noble and elevated spirit; that he may preserve that dignity of mind and of deportment, without which he will never obtain the respect and confidence of families; who possesses a rare mixture of gentleness and firmness; for, inferior though he be, in station, to many individuals in the *Communes*, he ought to be the obsequious servant of none; a man not ignorant of his rights, *but thinking much more of his duties*; shewing to all a good exemple and serving to all as a counsellor; not given to change his condition, but satisfied with his situation, because it gives him

“the power of doing good. To rear up Masters approaching to such a model is a difficult task, and yet we must succeed in it, or we have done nothing for elementary instruction. A bad Schoolmaster, like a bad Priest, is a scourge to a Commune; and though we are often obliged to be contented with indifferent ones, we must do our best to improve the average quality.”

Now, I ask, has the present law provided for the improvement of the teachers? It is true that, in 1851, a law was passed for the establishment of *one* Normal School to supply the want of good teachers, which has been so sensibly felt in a population of 890,000 souls! What good, what favorable result can be expected from *one* Normal School, which distance and poverty render inaccessible to nearly the whole of those who are devoted to teaching? In truth some have (though they discovered in this last law, passed nearly two years ago, a joke of the Legislature; and yet, this law has not, even at the time I write, received its entire effect!

To what is the teaching in our elementary schools limited at the present day? What is the utility of this teaching for the well being of man, for his intellectual and mental development, and can it become an element of prosperity to the state, a means of improving the moral and material condition of the people?

These important questions were raised in France in 1847, and here is what we read on the subject in the excellent *Journal des Economistes*, which contains an extract of a memorandum read by M. Rapet, before the Academy of Moral Sciences.

“To teach children the mechanism of reading, of writing and of a few arithmetical operations; to teach them mechanically to spell through the rules of grammar, unintelligible to their minds, or the names of men and countries, heaped together in books the only merit of which consists in including the greatest number in the smallest possible space, does not, certainly, require great talents in him who limits his attention to that. But nothing remains of such teaching—there is nothing at least for the development of the intellectual faculties; the memory alone can profit by it.

“But to teach the elementary principles, to cultivate the intelligence of the pupil, and form his judgment; to accustom him to observe, to compare, to place him in a position to comprehend the reason of things, to seize the analogies, the differences, to remark the intimacy between causes and effects, and to make, when occasion offers, a useful application of what he knows, that is what instruction ought to effect, but which is not done by ordinary means. That is also what few teachers are capable of.”

How many male and female teachers are there in Lower in a position to give this direction to teaching?

“It is now universally admitted that *Seminaries* for the *training of Teachers* are absolutely necessary to an efficient system of public instruction,—nay, as an integral part, as the vital principle of it.” This truth is proclaimed in England, France, Germany and the United States of America.

M. Cousin, in his Report on Public Instruction in Prussia, says that *the State has done nothing for popular education, if it does not watch that those who devote themselves to teaching be well prepared.*

But it is not sufficient to form good teachers; it is also necessary that provision be made remunerating them suitably. Our law on primary instruction has only provided in a vague manner for the payment of the teachers; it leaves this remuneration to the arbitrary will of ignorant and parsimonious school commissioners, who only consider cheapness, and believe they have acted liberally towards the teacher when they have given him a salary a little higher than that given to a farm servant. I believe that the average salary of the teachers in the District of Quebec is from £20, to £25, per annum! Is it possible, that for this small sum, qualified teachers can be procured? What educated man (unless from a love of the public good,) will go and devote the best years of his life to teaching, for a salary which would cause the lowest clerk in a shop to shrug his shoulders for very

pity? But people say: we have a certain number of school districts which must be provided with masters. In the first place I do not see the necessity of so great a number of schools; and why, in order to give a master to each of them it is necessary to accept as teachers persons totally disqualified. I do not see why under the specious pretext of facilitating access to the schools to all the persons residing in a locality, we ought to adopt the system of multiplicity of schools, a multiplicity which will result in the end in affording instruction to no one. For what civil or moral instruction can children obtain from male or female teachers who hire their services for £25, £20, £15, £12, and even £8, per annum? Is it to be believed in good faith, that with the system of multiplying the schools, with the impossibility of procuring competent masters and mistresses, education will be made to progress, and its benefits and advantages be appreciated. Without doubt it is desirable that all the inhabitants of a parish should possess a good elementary school; and in order to obtain this precious advantage, there should be sufficient money to pay the teachers suitably; but as that is scarcely possible, is it not better to have fewer schools in each parish, and have good ones?

In the *Journal de Québec* we find the following excellent article on the same subject:—

“One of the first, the most important duties of every good government,” says Mr. Dupont White, “is to afford the people the benefit of a solid and moral education. By what means can the people receive this instruction, so essential to the prosperity of the state, and to the happiness of its inhabitants, if the teachers are not placed in a better and more advantageous position than they have hitherto enjoyed? Where can masters be found at 200 francs (£10) capable of giving such instruction? How create an *esprit de corps*, and all the guarantees that it admits of, among men whom the urgency of their wants, whom the inferiority of their minds and their talents can only consign to the ungrateful functions of teachers for so small a remuneration? Is not the teacher, like the priest, charged with the care of souls? Why then mete out to him with such a stingy hand, the wages due to his painful and important labours?”

“Permit me to direct your attention to the present situation of the school-masters,” said Lord John Russell, in the last session of the British Parliament, (1846.) “There is no duty more useful than theirs; they are the men on whom we principally rely for the religious and civil instruction of the people, and nevertheless, their remuneration is pitiful; their position so little inviting to a person of education, that, generally, a school-master does not remain such for more than ten years.”

“I one day questioned the Secretary of the English and foreign School Societies, on the subject of teachers formed by the Normal Schools, and he replied:—

“We have a great many clever young men at our school who would make excellent teachers. They leave, and take charge of a school, but it continually happens that being capable of obtaining a more lucrative position, known to be such, they are drawn into another sphere; they enter into more advantageous business, and leave the position of school-master to persons of inferior knowledge.”

“There exists in this, according to my view, a *national calamity*,” added the speaker, “in the midst of general assent; for however important may be the position of a clerk in a shop, or that of a confidential man in a manufactory, there is none, however, more grave, more important, and more eminently useful than that of *teaching youth, that of bringing up the children who will form in a few years the people of this country.*”

“If we wish to see more knowledge in the pupil? it will be necessary to have more capacity in the master; and for that purpose we must offer to that capacity advantages equal to those which it can obtain in every other employment.”

Commenting on these words, the *Journal* adds:—"In effect, what talented and educated man would consent to vegetate during the best years of his life, for a miserable salary, in the career of instruction, and be exposed to drag out his last days in all kinds of want, when age or infirmities have forced him to give up the profession of teacher? Where, we say, is the man who possesses the talents, and is qualified in every respect to discharge the high functions of teaching, who, seeing the poor despised teacher less paid than the stable groom of the rich man, would give up the advantages which so many other positions offer him, in which a multitude of persons succeed in obtaining, if not a fortune, at least a competency, respect and happiness? And notwithstanding all these considerations which strike the eyes of the most blind, we continue to remain in one system of routine, to legislate on public instruction in such a manner as to make the teacher a despised and often a contemptible man. And after this we are astonished at the apathy, at the indifference of the people for instruction; and we are astonished that the people have little or no respect or esteem for men whom they see despised by persons of standing, by the *élite* of society? This is, it must be acknowledged, a sad state of things, but it is, however, the position of Lower Canada, where the teacher is placed on the last step of society. What is more sad, and still more deplorable, is, that the teachers qualified to exercise the noble and sublime functions of teaching are included in that stupid contempt with which good society treats every one who bears the name of a teacher. Can we believe, in good faith, that with the existence of such a state of things it is possible that instruction can progress and be loved, or the teachers respected and esteemed?"

"What do we wait for then to render to this class of men, without whom society cannot exist, the justice, honor and respect due to it? When will a good law on public instruction do away with all the ignorant who dishonor the title of teacher, and place in that position, which good sense requires, the men really worthy of teaching the youth, *who in a few years will become the people of Lower Canada*. When will this be done? Go and ask our legislators." (*Journal of the 28th February, 1852.*)

In Belgium, the law not only regulates the salaries of the teachers, but it also makes wise provision for the teachers, by establishing for them an economical fund for the purpose of securing assistance to them when they become infirm or incapable of exercising their profession. This assistance also extends to their widows and children. This fund is composed: 1st, of an annual sum deducted from the salary and the emoluments of the teachers; 2nd, of the amounts levied in each province conformably to law; 3rd, of a grant from the State; 4th, of the gifts of individuals. The sum deducted from the salary of the teacher cannot be less than 15 francs nor exceed 45 francs per annum.

If we are desirous of having good teachers, let us bring teaching out of the mire in which men unworthy of the fair name of teachers have plunged it. Let us surround the teacher with the respect and the consideration due to him, in order that he may, by the position made for him, be placed on an equal footing with the principal persons of his locality; let the parents and their children consider and respect him, and let him be offered all the encouragement possible; in a word, let him have a position equal, as regards property, to that of the farmer or mechanic, with sufficient means to admit of his establishing and bringing up honourably a family, without dreading adversity, and qualified teachers will easily be found. But as long as the teacher is left to struggle against want and the contempt of every body, as long as teaching is regarded as a low occupation as long as it is considered as the receptacle of good for nothing persons, let us be assured that we shall never have qualified teachers, and public instruction will grovel painfully in the deep mire through which it has dragged itself for the

last half century that we have commenced to occupy ourselves with this important branch of government, and as in former days, generations will be born, and succeed one another without having known the advantages and the benefits of a good education and solid and practical instruction. I cannot leave this important point without citing the opinion of Dr. Ryerson.

"In all countries where School Teachers are regularly trained, the profession of teaching holds a high rank in public estimation, so that ignorant and worthless persons could no more find employment as Schoolmasters, than they could as Professors, or Physicians, or Lawyers. Thus the infant and youthful mind of a country, by the law of public opinion itself, is rescued from the nameless evils arising from the ignorance and pernicious examples of incompetent and immoral Teachers."

It is a notorious fact that in Lower Canada, teachers who are worthy in every respect have abandoned teaching for more lucrative employments. I can at this very moment name some who are exerting themselves to embrace another state which permits them more easily to supply the wants of their young families.

3rd. CAUSE.—The want of every provision regulating a system of instruction, a uniform mode of teaching; and yet, nothing is more important, and no question occupied longer and more seriously the attention of the friends of instruction and of education among the most enlightened nations of the old world; and nevertheless in the majority of our schools, we still follow the routine system of the ages of ignorance.

"Methods for instructing youth are abundant," says Mr. Roselly de Lorgues, "but there are only four fixed modes of teaching. The first which has already become ancient, is called the *individual* mode, the second the *simultaneous* mode, the third the *mutual* mode, the fourth the *simultaneous* and *mutual* mode united. The individual mode, although still followed, is we must say, a *real calamity* as regards primary instruction. It requires each pupil to be called up in his turn, in order to recite, to calculate, and to read separately. Now, as a class lasts two hours and a half in an ordinary school of 30 pupils, the master with the best intentions can give but five minutes to each of them. And if, as it often happens, the number of pupils amounts to double this number, then instead of five minutes, the child will receive but two minutes and a half. This brief demonstration sufficiently explains, why so many young intelligences are seen quite thrown away, and languishing on the benches of a school during their best years. The principal characteristics of the individual mode are these: fatigue, lonesomeness, loss of time and sterility. We have only to point them out to lead us to entertain a hope that soon every teacher who understands his duty, will abandon a routine justly fallen into discredit.

"*Simultaneous* teaching consists in an exact classification of capacity, whence, particularly, its success depends. The pupils are divided according to the order of their instruction; the lesson given by the master to one of them is followed by all the others together. Emulation keeps their attention on the studies, as each of them must be prepared to correct that one who might make a mistake. What is read by a member of the section is followed at the same time by the whole section. The advantages of this mode over individual instruction are indubitable. The pupil and the section are blended together. The more numerous the section is, the harder is the lesson, and consequently the more profitable it is. But the more sections there are, the less time can the master devote to them. This mode, therefore, is attended also with an inconvenience; the instruction given is only casual.

"The *mutual* mode is ingenious in its mechanism, and worthy of real study. It places under the eye of the master all the sections together. Without any loss of time, they can work together by means of monitors, who direct

“them separately. The monitors are selected from the best pupils; they receive the lesson from the master, and transmit it to their fellow pupils. Thus the sections of different stages of advancement go on together.

“*Advantages of the mutual mode of teaching over the simultaneous one.*— Each monitor having under him ten pupils, the teacher can without difficulty direct an ordinary school of 100 pupils, for he has, so to speak, but 10. There is no hiatus, no interruption in the labours of each class. *Inconvenience.* The monitors being pupils themselves, their teaching cannot equal that of the master in geography, arithmetic, the art of speaking with facility, &c.”

The simultaneous and mutual modes united, afford notable advantages over the preceding ones. The pupils are classed according to their exact capacity; they continue under the surveillance of the monitors. After the lesson, each monitor repeats this lesson to his respective section. The master himself examines and also questions each pupil and sees, with his own eyes. He devotes to this useful duty the half of the time of the duration of the classes.

Experience has shewn that this mode is the best. It is that followed by the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and which partly gives to their teaching an incontestable superiority. Under the present law, the choice of the mode of teaching is left to the School Commissioners, the greater part of whom, not knowing even the names of the different modes of teaching, leave all to the teachers, who in general are seldom more learned on this matter. There are some School Commissioners and parents who pretend to dictate to the master the mode of teaching that he ought to follow, and very naturally this mode is the individual one. It is within my knowledge that parents have withdrawn their children from schools directed by masters who followed the simultaneous and mutual modes, because, said they, they did not pay to have their children instructed by other children. To such foolish pretensions on the part of the school commissioners or the parents, there is no answer, as the only possible one would be a dissertation on the divers modes of teaching; a dissertation which the ignorance of such persons would render useless.

It is then necessary and even indispensable to the purposes of education, not to leave the mode of teaching to the arbitrary will of the School Commissioners. The choice being once made by the Legislature, every one would be compelled to submit to it.

Our law does not even define the different branches of study to be taught in the Elementary Schools or in the Model Schools. It leaves this important point to the School Commissioners. Very well; but if perchance nearly all the School Commissioners hardly know how to read and write; if even, as is the case in several places, not one of the five Commissioners knows how to read or sign his name, who will regulate the course of study? The law does not say. Indeed, it must be admitted, here is a power confided to parties very capable of making a judicious use of it, one which will prove advantageous to education! It is true that the law requires, since the 1st July, 1852, that the teachers shall know everything that can render them capable of teaching with success the branches of Elementary Education. But if the Commissioners wish to exempt from learning grammar or geography, the children whose education is confided to them; if they pretend nevertheless that they can do without all those things, *because their fathers and grandfathers who were ignorant of them, lived*, what can the master do? He must humbly bow his head before the intelligence of the scholastic sanhedrim, and obey, under pain of being turned out. Can we be astonished that, under such a state of things, public education makes no progress! We ought rather to wonder at seeing it make any at all.

4th CAUSE. *Variety of books in use in the schools.* The law has not regulated in an effective manner the choice of books to be used in the schools; hence

the variety of those books. The medly and the confusion which exist in this respect, cannot be imagined. The Board of Examiners appears incidentally to possess the power of approving and recommending these books. It is at least what might be inferred from the fifth paragraph of the 21st section, which treats of the powers of the commissioners; but the twelve paragraphs of the 50th section, which relate to the powers and attributes of the Board of Examiners, do not say a word on the subject! Besides, the Board of Quebec, relying on the 5th paragraph above cited, has approved of and recommended certain French and English books to be used in the schools. This approbation, this recommendation, have been without effect, and the School Commissioners authorized to regulate the course of study, have naturally supposed that they might also choose the school books. Hence the variety which exists even in schools of the same School Municipality. "The variety of text-books in the Schools," says Dr. Ryerson, "and the objectionable character of many of them, is a subject of serious and general complaints. Any interference on the part of the Government in a subject of this kind was formerly thought to be incompatible with individual right and liberty; but experience has taught the fallacy of this and many hundred theories, and efforts are now making to correct the evils which such speculations have produced."

5th CAUSE. *Absence of all real and effective control over the schools.*—This absence is one of the greatest vices of the existing laws. "If it be the master, who makes the School, says Dr. Ryerson, it is the Government that makes the system. What the Master is to the one, the Government must be to the other—the director, the animating spirit of it."

It is very true that the law, in order to secure a sort of surveillance over the schools has endeavoured to bring into action numerous agents, from the Chief Justice and other judges, the high dignitaries of the Church, and the priests, the members of the legislature, the magistrates, the mayors, and the officers of the militia, as high as captains, inclusively. But what result has this long list of visitors designated by the Legislature, produced? Who among them, with the exception, perhaps, of ministers of religion, has ever left his occupation to visit the schools in his neighborhood. At Quebec, where there are numbers of these visitors of every capacity and condition, not one of them has ever entered a school to visit it, according to law.

Latterly, School Inspectors have been appointed. These officers only possess the powers of the Superintendent, and nothing more. In what then, do the powers of the Superintendent consist? What control has he over the mode of teaching, over the capacity and the other qualifications of the teachers, over the course of study, in a word, over anything whatsoever connected with the system of primary instruction? None whatever. He is but a simple machine for receiving reports, receiving and distributing the moneys devoted to public education. Without any control over the acts of the Commissioners, whom the law has invested with an unlimited power which acknowledges nothing above it but the power of the legislature, the Superintendent and the School Inspectors, his deputies or representatives, have no power, and the Commissioners may, if they see fit, laugh at the Superintendent and his deputies. So much for the control which the Executive exercises by means of its officers over the schools and the persons appointed to see the law on public education carried out. More than £3000 a year is expended in paying the salaries of these officers; this amount is a pure loss, without producing any useful result to the cause of elementary education.

"As proper rules and a judicious course of instruction, prescribed for a School, would be of little use without a competent and diligent Master to execute the one and impart the other; (says Dr. Ryerson,) so the enactment of a Common School

“ Law, however complete in its provisions, and the sanctioning of a course of instruction, however practical and comprehensive, will contribute little for the education of the people, without the parental, vigilant and energetic oversight of the Government. If it is the duty of the Government to legislate on the subject of public instruction, it must be its duty to see its laws executed. To pass a public law, and then abandon, or, what is equivalent, neglect the execution of it, is a solecism in Government. Yet this is the very absurdity which some Governments have long practised; and this is the primary cause why education has not advanced under such Governments. After having enacted a law or laws on the subject of Schools, they have left them,—as a cast-off orphan,—to the neglect or the care, as it might happen, of individuals, or neighbourhoods, or towns,—among whom the law has remained a dead letter, or lingered a feeble existence, according as the principal persons in each locality might be disposed to act or not act, in a matter so vitally important to the entire interests and highest prosperity of the State.”

“ If Government exists for the prosperity of the public family, then every thing relating to educational instruction demands its *practical* care as well as legislative interference. Yet not a few persons have spoken and written as if the Government had nothing to do in a department which more than any other involves the heart and strength, and happiness of the people, not to say the existence of a free Constitution and system of laws, than merely to pass a statute and make certain appropriations,—leaving the application or misapplication of public monies, and every thing practical and essential in the administration of the law, to various localities, as so many isolated or independent Democracies.”

Mr. Ryerson, in the extract from his report which I have just given, most justly and most truly criticises the total neglect in which the execution of our law on Elementary Education is left, and the absolute want of control and surveillance on the part of the Government. I do not think that any one will bring forward as an argument against me that a surveillance is exercised by the Superintendent and the School Inspectors. This surveillance, if it exists at all, is limited to controlling the expenditure of the public monies; as for the rest, it does not and cannot exist in consequence of the want, in the person of its officers, of those powers without which no control, no efficient surveillance can exist. The School Commissioners are the sole judges of every thing which relates to the execution of the most essential part of the law: the system, the mode of teaching, the course of study, the choice of books,—all is within their exclusive jurisdiction, and the Government has no more than the Superintendent or the School Inspectors the right of imposing its will upon the Commissioners, the supreme judges of the instruction and the education of youth. Of what use are the Superintendent and the School Inspectors? Can they exercise that control and surveillance which are necessary towards the efficient working of a law having public instruction for its object? Can they control the progress of education, the qualifications of the teachers? Have they the legal right, the power to make the law work, to correct the abuses, to force the Commissioners to adopt a rational mode of teaching, to regulate, to improve the course of study? No. What then is the use of these Inspectors who are but the counter-parts of the Superintendent, and, like him, without power and without authority?

6th Cause.—*Incapacity of the School Commissioners.*—Another radical defect in our law and which, more than any other cause, has contributed towards paralysing the effect of that law, is the incapacity of nearly the whole of the Commissioners. It seems to me that a law, the good effects of which depend entirely upon those who are charged with its execution, ought to be, as respects its operation, confided to persons capable of understanding all the importance of the mission which is given them, and endowed with all the knowledge necessary to enable them to appreciate the numerous difficulties, the responsibility of that mission; and the

ought, particularly, to be animated with the sincere desire to give to this law, how soever defective it may be, the most extended operation possible. This appears so much the more necessary that the law confers upon these persons enormous powers and attributes which they exercise without apprehending the control or the surveillance of any authority whatsoever.

Can happy effects be expected from a law on public instruction, when the School Commissioners charged with its execution are nearly all entirely incompetent to discharge the numerous and important duties imposed upon them? What can be expected from a law whose ambiguous and obscure provisions, drawn up without order and without method, encumbered with difficulties which embarrass even juriconsults, what can be expected, I say, from such a law the execution of which is confided at random, subject to the caprices of the elective system? It would be just as proper to have the merits of a painting decided by a jury of blind men. But what are we to think, if to the prejudices of ignorance are often added bad feelings towards the law of which they are the agents?

But, it will perhaps be said that it is impossible to find in each School Municipality a sufficient number of men qualified to perform the duties of School Commissioners. Granted; and this impossibility is the best reason that can be given in favor of the control and the surveillance of the Government over the operation of the School laws. If, in general, the Commissioners are not competent to perform their mission, if they are incapable of making this law work, it is an additional reason why its operation should not be left without the control, without the active and energetic surveillance of the Executive; this is an additional reason, also, for not confiding to incompetent persons the powers and enormous attributes which they exercise without discretion as well as without appeal.

Thus the Legislature has left the execution of this law to incapable men; it has placed the teacher at the mercy of the caprice and arbitrary will of ignorant and stubborn despots: it has made men the sole judges of the system of instruction, of the mode of teaching, of the courses of study, of the classical books, the majority of whom can hardly read and write. Is it then to be wondered at that the law on primary instruction *has not worked with success* during the past, that its works badly at present. It is evident that it will produce no better results in future, if the existing order of things be continued. I ought to observe that all the School Commissioners are not ignorant and incompetent; there are some perfectly qualified to discharge the duties imposed upon them; but, unfortunately, their number is very small.

7th Cause.—Is the consequence of the little confidence which the people, generally, have in the present system of education. It naturally results from those which I have above pointed out. In effect, what confidence can the parents have in the advantages which result from instruction under the present order of things? A child has attended the schools of his parish during several years;—his parents, believing him to be sufficiently educated, withdraw him from school. The father has a letter to write, an account to draw up, or has received a letter which he cannot read himself. He calls his child and directs him to write or to read that letter, or to draw up the account. What is his disappointment, his grief, at discovering that the child cannot read, or write a letter, or draw up an account. "For what purpose, the grieved father will say, have I sacrificed so much money, have I deprived myself during so many years of the services of my child, to send him to schools which he has left as ignorant as I am myself?" The good man, incapable of comprehending the vices and the omissions of the present law, which obliges him to pay, for the advantage of his children, for an education which they have not received, and which they could not obtain,—throws the whole

blame upon instruction and education, which he regards as *a pretext invented by the Government to obtain money from the people*. There is but one step from thence to contempt for education and for teachers; and this step is soon got over.

The want of consideration for the teachers, the small salary allowed them, their poverty, the wants which beset them, the state of dependence in which they live, all contribute to give the uneducated portion of the population a very unfavorable idea of education. "What is the use," will an ignorant and rich farmer say, "what is the use of education? Look at the schoolmaster who is as *learned as the curé!* Well, he is poor, no one respects him; I who am ignorant, who know not how to read nor write more than my father or my grandfather did, am rich and respected; I am a churchwarden, a municipal councillor. Without education, I can acquire property and influence among the inhabitants of my parish. It is not true then that education assists the people in acquiring property, as, everywhere, the schoolmasters are poor and less respected than the beadle of the parish. For, if education serves to enrich the people, why are the schoolmasters, who give instruction to others, so poor, so miserable, so little respected?" This is a specious argument that I have heard used a great many times. It has been productive of very deplorable consequences, which all the reasoning in the world will not remedy; for this argument is backed by ignorance and prejudice, and, it must be said, the present school system gives it new strength.

It has been stated and repeated that the mass of the people of Lower Canada are hostile to the cause of education. This is an infamous calumny. Our people are anxious to acquire knowledge and to learn. But what can they be taught, what can they learn in the majority of our elementary schools? Nothing; not even sufficient reading to make the children appreciate its attraction or its utility. What books are placed in the hands of the pupils? For the child, reading is a painful task which he performs without any taste as well as without pleasure, and which he gives up for ever from the moment he leaves the school, where he has passed in lonesomeness and inaction the bright days of childhood.

No; the people are not hostile to education. Look at the few rare localities where zealous and well-meaning Commissioners have succeeded by incessant efforts to make education progress, in spite of and notwithstanding the law. See with what zeal the parents attend at the examinations of the schools, with what interest they follow all the exercises. In these places, worthy teachers, whom a rare devotion has drawn into the ungrateful position of teaching, have known how to render study attractive, and to conceal with art the thorns. Their pupils, therefore, progress, and this is the sweetest recompense of these worthy teachers. Is it the law which has produced these happy results? No, they existed before it. This law may have destroyed the good that existed, but it cannot be productive of any.

Ought we then to be astonished that the people who pay uselessly for the instruction of their children murmur and feel badly disposed towards the present law? We ought rather to be astonished at their patience, in supporting a state of things which compels them to pay for the education of the youth, who lose their time in bad schools, where they learn, for want of anything better, idleness and perhaps something worse.

Create a rational, uniform, and efficacious system of public instruction; give it all the necessary requisites that it may recommend itself by its good efforts, by its happy results, then the people will hasten to give it the most cordial support, as they have always done, to what they know to be good, useful and advantageous.

Third Question.—What would be the best means to adopt for the advancement of Primary Instruction and to perfect our system of Elementary Schools?

Answer.—Before answering the question, it is proper to examine the object of public instruction; and the obligation of all governments relative to this subject, which is of vital importance for the happiness, the moral and material well-being of the people, and the prosperity of the country.

Let us see what Mr. Guizot says on this subject, in his *Essay on Public Instruction in France*:

“The state gives education and instruction to those who do not receive any without it, and procures it for those willing to receive it. Such is the object of all the establishments for public instruction. There is no situation, no profession, which does not require certain knowledge without which man cannot labour with benefit to society or to himself.

“There is then a certain kind of education and a certain degree of instruction which all the subjects of the state want. This is what is called *Primary Instruction*. It ought to comprise the precepts of religion and morality, the general duties of men in society, and that elementary knowledge which has become so useful and nearly necessary in all conditions, as well for the interest of the State as for that of individuals. There is also a certain education which men who are destined to lead a life of leisure and ease, or who embrace liberal professions of a higher order, such as commerce, letters, &c., cannot do without. Since intelligence has become extended, it ought necessarily to accompany superiority of rank or of fortune. Without this intelligence, this superiority would be forgotten and would obtain no consideration. Since science has become a real force, it is indispensable to all those whose situation obliges or calls upon them to exercise some influence over other men under the penalty of sinking into inferiority.

“This is the object of secondary instruction.

“In fine, the third degree of instruction is the *special instruction* which forms ministers of religion capable of propagating and defending it; military men in a position to apply, in the interests of country, that knowledge which war, both by land and sea, demands at the present day; statesmen educated in everything which can give a solid basis to the internal and external prosperity of the people; magistrates versed in the science as well as in the principles of the laws, and capable of directing their application; physicians skilful in the use of all the resources of public sciences for the benefit of the public health, and the relief of human infirmities.

“It is only necessary to glance at the history of nations to become convinced that these three degrees of instruction are indispensable, and that upon their relative goodness, their wise distribution, depend, in a certain degree, not only the well-being of the subject, the brilliancy and the prosperity of an empire, but also its internal repose and its duration.

“*Primary Instruction* provides means for the inferior classes of society to extend their industry, improve their lot, and thus to open, to the advantage of the State, new sources of riches. Its necessity is based upon considerations still more important. If it were possible to condemn a people to irrevocable ignorance, how unjust soever such an interdiction might be, we could conceive that the superior classes, in the hope of assuring their superiority, would attempt to pronounce and to maintain it. But Providence has not permitted this injustice to be possible, and has attached to it such dangers that interest, together with duty, forbids Governments to commit it.

“*Secondary instruction* is not of less importance. Its necessity is acknowledged, because men who might contest its advantages have received it, and now reap its fruits; but its bad nature and the imprudent manner of distributing it might have, and in fact have had the worst consequences. Too light and too little appropriate to the state of the nation, or to the wants of the time, it exalts

“the imagination of young persons, gives rise in their minds to a crowd of false ideas, and prepares them badly for the world in which they ought to live, or for the different careers they may embrace; it enlivens the activity of their minds without regulating it, thus giving them up, almost without resistance, to sophisms of all kinds against which it ought to have fortified them. Distributed with too great profusion and too little discernment, it inspires the young men of the inferior classes with a contempt for their equals and a disgust for their position, by placing them in a species of false superiority which does not permit them to be content with a laborious and obscure existence, and yet does not afford them that real and lasting superiority, which few men have received from nature, and which no education will cause them to acquire. It thus peoples society with useless members, who bring into it a spirit of insubordination, a desire for change and an anxious and vague ambition which cannot be satisfied by a situation which is always uncertain and which is in a continual state of excitement in endeavoring to acquire either ease or authority.”

“*Education*, in general, is not less important than *instruction*, and perhaps the government ought, in this respect, to exercise a more direct action and a more exact surveillance.”

“The time has come,” says Mr. Roselly de Lorgues, “the time has at last come when elementary instruction must be proclaimed *a debt due by the State*—every citizen can claim his part of the payment, by contributing himself, according to his means. Like the protection of the law, it is due to all. As every man can communicate his ideas by words, it is necessary that he should be enabled to do so by letters; it is his distinctive privilege above all the beings of the creation.”

“In the organisation of a government which rests upon the *elective power*, *instruction* is due to all, because all have rights to exercise, or duties to accomplish; primary teaching is neither a gift nor an act of liberality, but a sacred **DEBT**, due by the STATE. This principle being established, it follows, that in order to see throughout the whole Kingdom a national, identical, classical and professional education, it is not by means of the parsimonious votes of Municipal Councils that the seed is to be sown, but this annual debt must be paid by a *sufficient and unchangeable budget* voted by the Legislature.”

In my answer to the second question, I have sufficiently pointed out what primary instruction ought to be, to render it efficacious and useful, nevertheless I will take the liberty of making to the Committee the following suggestions, extracted from the prospectus of a law on primary instruction, which I prepared nearly two years ago. From 1836 up to the present day, as secretary to the Society of Education of the District of Quebec, and also as a Commissioner of the Catholic Schools of the City of Québec, and as a member of the Board of Examiners, I have taken an active part in the administration of the schools, and I have specially considered the means to be adopted to endow the country with a good system of primary instruction. These are my suggestions:—

1. A Minister or Commissioner of public instruction. His duties and attributes would be among others; 1. To regulate the mode of teaching and the books to be used; except religious and moral books, which would be chosen by the ecclesiastical authorities of each religious denomination. 2. To make all the necessary regulations for the government, administration and discipline of the schools. 3. To make up and send to the district superintendents, hereafter mentioned, all the instructions necessary to the working of the law, and the better organisation of the department of public instruction. 4. To hear and decide on all complaints brought against the district superintendents, and to make a report thereof to the Governor. 5. To make up, every year, a complete and circumstantial report on public instruction, embracing its progress, the different branches of study, the num-

ber of pupils following each branch, &c. 6. To regulate and decide all questions and all cases not provided for by law, and all difficulties relative to its interpretation. And every such decision or regulation should be conclusive and final, and without appeal to any tribunal whatever or in any manner whatsoever. Every contravention, infraction of a rule, or disobedience of a decision rendered by the Minister of public instruction, to be punished as every offence against the school laws.

II. Superintendents of public instruction in each judicial district of Lower Canada.

Their duties and attributes to be the same as those of the present superintendent, and further, to hear and decide, without appeal, every difficulty or contestation relative to the employment of the monies used in the execution of the law; to watch over the execution of the law, conformably to its provisions and to the instructions of the Minister of public instruction and his regulations and decisions; to visit and examine every year, at the period fixed by the Minister of public instruction, the schools in their respective districts; to examine with care the progress of the pupils, the capacity of the teachers; to deprive teachers of their office for incapacity, negligence or immorality; to make a report at the time fixed by the Minister of instruction; to see that the school commissioners conform to the law and to the regulations and decisions of the Minister of public instruction, to examine the accounts of the Secretary-Treasurer and the registers containing the minutes of the commissioners; to award fines against school commissioners who may contravene the law, &c.; to conform scrupulously to the instructions they may receive from the Minister of public instruction.

III. Boards of public instruction in each judicial District. Such Boards to be composed of six qualified persons appointed by the Governor. Among other duties they should examine the qualifications of the male and female teachers, (the Brothers of the Christians Schools and the Ladies of the Congregation excepted,) grant them diplomas and be bound to make from time to time to the Minister of public instruction all the suggestions they may deem useful to the cause of education.

IV. School Commissioners, elected in each locality by the proprietors (except in the Cities of Quebec and Montreal where they should be chosen by the Corporations of these Cities. Their duties and attributes would be: 1. To take possession of all the school property in their respective localities. 2. To look after the keeping up, repairing and building of the school houses. 3. To engage male and female teachers who are duly qualified according to law. 4. To conform to the requirements of the law and to the regulations and decisions of the Minister of public instruction under a penalty. 5. To visit at least every two months the schools under their control. 6. To make choice of sites for the construction of schools. 7. To divide each locality into School Districts with the approbation of the Superintendent of the District. To levy by assessment: 1. A sum equal to that allotted to their locality out of the funds for Common Schools. 2. All sums necessary for the repair, keeping up and construction of school houses. 3. All sums necessary for the payment of the male and female teachers, if the assessment already imposed insufficient. 4. To fix the scale of monthly contribution payable by each parent having children of the requisite age to attend the schools. 9. To take the census of all the children of the Municipality. 11. To decide all difficulties arising between the teachers and the parents of the scholars.

V. Formalities of the assessment, to be simplified.

VI. Normal Schools. One school at least in each of the Districts of Quebec and Montreal, to form masters. The school mistresses might be educated in a Community of girls in these Districts respectively. In addition to the expenses

of the establishment of Normal Schools and their annual support, a certain sum should be voted every year as an aid to assist persons not having the means of following the course of study in the Normal School, or to pay for their education in a Convent of girls.

* The rules and regulations of the Normal Schools to be made by the Minister of public instruction, &c.

VII. A Journal of public instruction which should be published under the direction of the Minister of public instruction and which would answer at the same time as an official Journal to give publicity to all the documents of the department of Public Education; it should be addressed to all the officers engaged in the execution of the law. The male and female teachers should be bound to subscribe to it. Subscription 5s. per annum.

VIII. Division of Public Education into *primary elementary instruction* and into *superior primary instruction*.

The different branches of these two classes of instruction to be determined by law.

IX. To fix by law the minimum salary to be paid to the male and female teachers.

There is no necessity for me to add that it would be proper to repeal the present law altogether and substitute another, embracing the above suggestions.

I know that my suggestions will not meet with the approbation of every one, that they will be regarded as conferring on the Minister of public instruction, dictatorial powers which, however, are necessary, nay indispensable during at least some years, to establish and consolidate a good system of public instruction. I believe that all who have made this matter the subject of their meditations will agree with me on this head. The plan I propose is not new. It is followed in France, in Belgium, and I believe also in Germany. Every where it has been productive of the most happy results. Why would it not be the same in Lower Canada?

Others say: but it would cost a great deal to put this plan into execution. I think that from £6000 to £8000 a year would be sufficient. Where millions are lavished on railroads, when the voting of £100,000 for material advantages is thought nothing of, it appears to me that we ought not to be niggard, and squabble about a trifle of £6000 or £800 when the instruction of a population like that of Lower Canada is at stake; unless, indeed, it be pretended that railroads are more advantageous to Canada than the instruction of its people; and I confess that such a pretension would not astonish me the least in the world. There are persons who see, who take account of, who esteem nothing but what is material, every thing which is not material is to them valueless. £ s. d. is the criterion by which they judge of every thing.

I should have liked to enter into some of the details of the plan I propose, but the length of these answers, as well as my occupations do not permit me to do so.

J. CREMAZIE.

Quebec, 14th April, 1853.