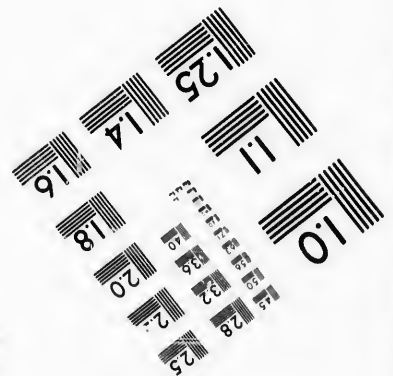
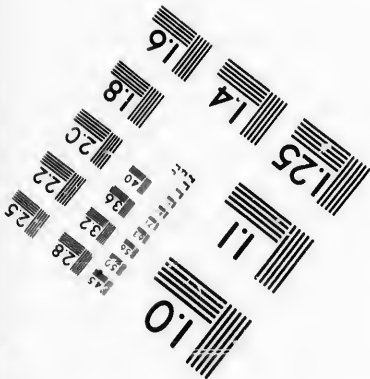
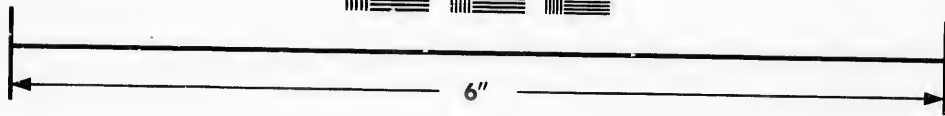
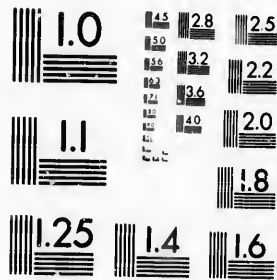


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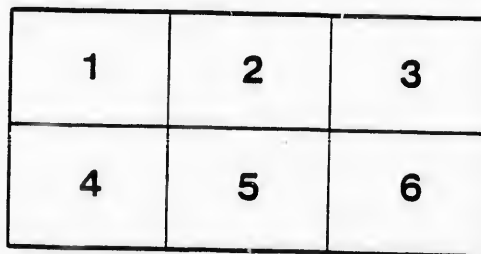
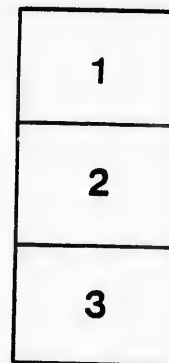
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Circular to Trustees.

London 1 June 1844

GENTLEMEN:—

I have the honor respectfully to offer the following observations with a view to assist you in the performance of your important duties of School Trustees.

And first, as regards the erection of School Houses. In my opinion, these should be well situated, properly arranged and lighted, and moderately heated. The situation should be high and at least dry, and not in the vicinity of stagnant water. It will be found on consideration, that school houses should front the South East, and be lighted from the North East and North West sides, for the following reasons:—Intense light not only produces fatigue, but it injures the sight. Windows in the South and West sides admit too much light both in summer and winter, and in the warm season the heat becomes oppressive, but if the windows are in the north east and north west sides only, neither of these inconveniences will be felt. The door only should open to the south east, and the south west side being opposite the lightest and hottest direction, should have neither door nor window in it. The ceiling should never be lower than ten feet in a building of 20 by 24 feet, and should be higher in proportion as the size increases. The windows, should be rather numerous than large, say two windows of 12 lights 10 x 12, with a circular top, in each of the two lighted sides. The outside appearance may thus be sacrificed by having the building not at right angles with the roads, and by not having lights on two sides, but the internal comfort will make ample amends for these seeming irregularities. Then the internal arrangement should be such that the whole school should be under the teacher's eye. To accomplish this, let low forms or seats from 9 to 12 inches high be provided with a back, for the smaller scholars, from 5 to 10, and other forms from 12 to 18, for scholars from 10 to 16 years of age. Every child in sitting should have his feet on the ground, otherwise the circulation in his feet and legs will be stopped, and pain and uneasiness produced, and study made irksome. Let the low seats with the younger scholars be in front, the high ones behind. The writing desks may with great convenience be placed along the two lighted sides of the house, about 3 feet from the wall; thus leaving a passage, and enabling the scholars to sit with their backs to the light fronting the teacher. The door be placed in the south east side and open from the right hand, the teacher's desk or table be may placed toward the south west side; there he will see the whole school and observe, without effort, all who come in and go out. In winter the heat should not exceed 70 degrees, and may be allowed to fall to 60 before the school is dismissed; and great attention should be paid to this, and a cheap thermometer be provided for every school. The very circumstance of attention to this and a little management and care to effect it, will not be without its moral influence as part of the discipline of the school.

Having the school house built and fitted up, your next care should be to have proper books, maps, &c. And as to books, although it is most desirable that the same kinds should be used in every school, still while so much diversity of opinion prevails, and the absolute right to prescribe is not vested in the Superintendent, it is not probable that a uniform system will be adopted. The best I know, and which I strongly recommend, are the educational course of Chambers of Edinburgh, but especially Small Lessons, Radiments of Knowledge, Moral Class Book, Animal Physiology, Introduction to English Composition, also Lemmie's Grammar, and the Geography of Stewart, Ewing, or Thompson. A set of Maps for each School District should, if possible, be procured. Those published by the Society for the diffusion of Useful Knowledge, are very good. The Maps are accompanied with the plans of the principal Cities in the world, together with views of the public buildings, &c., and will be found extremely useful, amusing, and instructive. In the wealthier school districts, a pair of Globes, or at least a terrestrial one, should belong to every school. The expense of the Books, &c., which I have mentioned, should not be considered as standing in the way. The poorest farmer in any of the older settlements never finds a difficulty in getting a horse, harness, waggon, clock, or any other article he fancies; but a small part of the price of either of these contributed by every family, would find all the books, maps, and globes I have recommended. And can any sum within the means of every man be spent in a more rational or more satisfactory manner, than in the intellectual and moral improvement of his family? Most people feel a pride, and it is laudable, in the comfort and respectable appearance of their families, and they require but to be reminded of the circumstance, to extend this to the more laudable advancement of their children in the scale of mental excellence.

By indomitable toil the present generation of this District have subdued the primeval forests, and where once were gloomy woods, are now fertile fields, and they who could thus labour for posterity should not withhold the additional boon of education to those who shall soon succeed them.

In the choice of a Teacher be exceedingly circumspect; let him be a person well qualified, and you cannot pay him too much—treat him with kindness, attention, and respect, and while you watch him with vigilance, harbor no concealed suspicions, but let him feel you have confidence in him. His, is in general, an ungracious employment, and he requires to be sustained and encouraged amidst the crosses and vexations which beset his path, even in the best regulated communities. The circumstances of the country have hitherto rendered the practice of sending the Teacher round to board with the parents of the different scholars almost indispensable, but the evils attending this system are very obvious. It has tended to destroy that respect which should always be maintained towards a teacher. It has exposed him in his unguarded moments to the keen scrutiny of the young, and they are close observers. It has exposed him to familiar remark with parents—exposed his weakness, perhaps his ignorance, and rendered him in the eyes of his pupils a common and ordinary being, who should have been invested as it were, in their opinion with more than human attributes. The life of a teacher in the country is sufficiently humiliating, without subjecting him to the further degradation of being a stranger every where, if he maintains his respect. If a teacher be a deserving person, and we want no other, it is hard indeed, to deprive him of that, which all men desire, and all studious ones ardently long for—a quiet home. Most men will teach for a less salary if boarded in one place, and that place should be, if possible, one whose owner has no children connected with the school. It is scarcely enough that a Teacher be impartial, he must if possible be above the suspicion of being otherwise. You will therefore recommend and try to persuade people that it is their interest to have their Teachers thus situated, and if the trial be but once made, it cannot fail to recommend itself to the thinking part of the community.

It will frequently happen that complaints will be made by both Teachers and parents for the same cause. While you ever evince a willingness to hear these complaints, it will always be prudent to refrain from expressing an opinion until you hear both sides; and to afford that soothing which time alone frequently gives, put off the time of finally hearing and settling the matter for as long a time as will not be inconsistent with the nature of the complaint. To men unaccustomed to hear conflicting statements and opposing views of the same transaction, it is often difficult to withhold remark, and to avoid forming a judgment upon it, but being reminded that we are apt to do so, will put you on your guard against this error, which always leads to incorrect opinions and unjust acts, while the motives may be perfectly pure.

Let the school regulations be few, simple, and well understood, and uphold strict obedience to the Teacher as indispensable. If your Teacher cannot be trusted with almost despotic power, he is in no wise fit to be a Teacher; your Rules should rather guide his discretion than control his power.

For your own safety, see that his lists are correctly and faithfully kept, and in your engagements do not overrate your powers of paying, keep within your means, and let your Teacher fully understand what he has to expect.

If difficulties arise, report them to the Township Superintendent, but first try to settle them yourselves. And in conclusion, I earnestly entreat you to enquire on your schools with energy and earnestness, remembering that to you, even in one year, is committed an important part in the education of a large portion of the rising generation.

*I am Dear Sirs
Yours truly
J. M. Smith
School Inspector*

