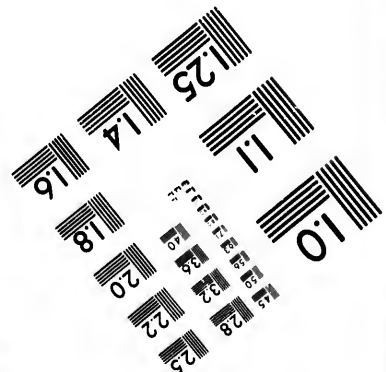
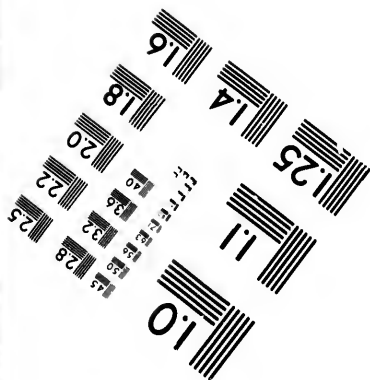
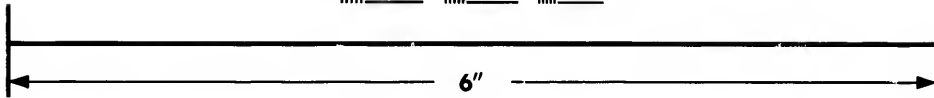
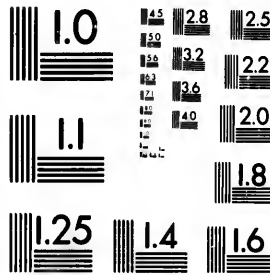


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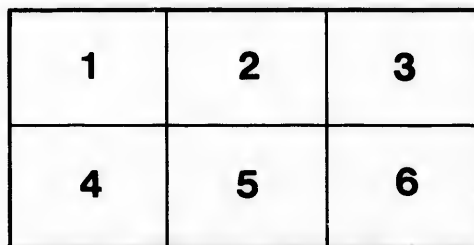
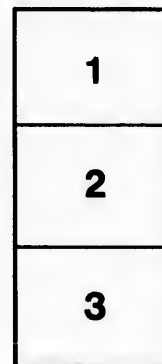
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ADDRESS
TO
THE PEOPLE OF NOVA SCOTIA,
ON
THE SUPPORT
OF THE
COMMON SCHOOLS.

BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION.

THE situation I hold, requires me not only to present annually to the Legislature an account of the educational condition of the Province, but also to offer such suggestions as may appear best fitted to promote its improvement. In pursuance of this duty I have, for five successive years, urged and pressed on the attention of the Legislature those views respecting school districts and school houses, the grading of schools, the qualifications of Teachers, the appointment of Inspectors, the establishment of a Provincial University &c., which I consider essential for our educational advancement; and, more especially, have I insisted, in my oral addresses to the public and in my reports to the Legislature, on what appears to me to be the best method of supporting the common school education of the land: and yet little or nothing has been done by the Legislature for the accomplishment of one or other of these objects.

The longer I continue in office, I am the more thoroughly impressed with the conviction that until something substantial is done with the Common Schools of the Province, we can neither keep pace with the general intelligence and progressive advancement of the age, nor furnish anything like an adequate supply of duly qualified students for the higher academic or collegiate institutions of the land. I have canvassed this subject in all its length and breadth. Since I entered on my present duties I have laboured, on an average eight hours a day, with a view of training up a

class of duly qualified teachers for the supply of these schools—and though some improvement has been effected by the voluntary efforts of the people themselves in the matter of school-houses and of the emolument of teachers, that improvement has been confined to a few of the more favoured and advanced localities, whilst the general condition of our common schools, both in point of quantity and quality, has been retrograding instead of advancing. If then, a sound and an efficient system of common school education constitute the basis of all national intelligence, industry and morality, surely it is high time that we bestir ourselves, and, calmly yet earnestly, enquire what, in present circumstances, can and ought to be done. To me, it appears plain and palpable that, whilst many things may and ought to be done for the removing of clamant defects and putting us on a career of high and ennobling progression, there is one thing lying at the bottom of the whole, without which all other remedial measures will prove of comparatively little avail,—I refer to the method of supporting these schools by compulsory assessment, giving effect to the principle ‘*that the property of all should be taxed for the education of all.*’ This, in my opinion, forms the grand specific for the removal of many of the ills under which we are at present labouring, as well as for the diffusion of a more healthful spirit throughout our educational system; and, in this respect, I believe, I have the sympathy of a large majority of my fellow-provincials. At all events, I am perfectly satisfied that the time has now arrived, in the history of Nova Scotia, for putting this point to the test, and ascertaining the amount of support you are prepared to give it. For this end, I have felt it my duty to forward to the different localities forms of petitions to the Legislature, in its behalf. Should these petitions receive the signatures of the greater proportion of the intelligence and influence of the province, I have little doubt that the Legislature will give the subject their immediate and careful consideration. If, on the other hand, they do not, I shall, at least, have the satisfaction of feeling that I have rid my conscience of no ordinary load of responsibility, and shall crave the liberty, in time to come, of laying the continuance of our present educational defects and blemishes, not at the door of the Legislature, but at your own.

That there may be no misapprehension or dubiety as to the way of carrying out the above mentioned principle, I may state, that whilst I would not hesitate for a moment to assume the obligation of raising the whole sum required for the maintenance of our Common schools by direct taxation, being persuaded that such a course would operate most beneficially for the accomplishment of the grand object contemplated—the universal education of the young—yet I scarcely think that the Province is ripe for

its adoption at the outset. In so far as the erection of commodious school-houses is concerned, I would have no hesitation in going the full length. After a careful revision of the School Districts, an enactment, in my opinion, ought to be passed, requiring the erection of a suitable school house in every legalized District, and, after a certain prescribed period, enjoining the withholding of the public funds until such a school house is provided. For this purpose, three or four plans of school houses, with specifications and general cost, ought to be put into circulation, and the inhabitants of each District formally summoned to make the selection, and, whatever be the expense of the one chosen by a clear majority—provided it possess the requisite dimensions for the population.—immediate steps should be taken for raising the requisite sum by compulsory assessment. In reference, however, to the support of the teachers, I would recommend that a modified form of assessment be adopted:—for example, that a third, as heretofore, be paid out of the general revenue, of the Province, that another third be raised by a compulsory County tax, and the other by the rateable inhabitants of the district, leaving it to their option to raise the necessary sum or a greater, if need be, for a higher style of education, either by voluntary subscription or direct taxation, provided always that when the former fails, the latter shall be immediately resorted to. This would be a recognition on the part of the Province, the County, and the District, of the benefits they respectively derive from an efficient system of a Common school education. The Province, in a collective capacity, would thereby express its appreciation of the boon. The County would do so more directly; whilst its assessment would also furnish an opportunity to the strong to help the weak, the older and more wealthy settlements to aid the younger and the less able. The part assigned the District would also exert a salutary influence. It would enable the inhabitants thereof to contribute to the cause of education according to their ability and estimate of its value, whilst, at the same time, it would give them the power of stimulating the teacher, and remunerating him according to his acceptability and efficiency.

Such is a brief sketch of the way in which this principle may be carried into effect, and regarding which we are most anxious to obtain your countenance and co-operation. There are hundreds and thousands in the Province longing for the adoption of this principle in some shape or other. There are others, who, though satisfied that a great and organic change is indispensably necessary in our educational condition, have never yet given much heed to, or canvassed in its varied aspects, the subject of direct taxation as a mode of supporting this branch of the public service. To such would we mainly address the following reasons in favour of

our principle, earnestly beseeching them to ponder these with unprejudiced and impartial minds, and we have little fear of the result.

REASON 1st.—*Direct taxation is the most effectual way of awaking in the minds of all an interest in the cause of education.*

We know not a greater impediment to the progress of education in this or any country than the general indifference that obtains, the all but universal prevalence of the notion that nobody in the District has anything to do with its educational affairs, save the individual who happens to have children to be educated. The Bachelor, the parent whose children are already educated, and a host of similar characters, seem to imagine that they are altogether free from any obligation to give of their substance for the support of the education of the District. They may as an act of charity, or of liberality, or for the accomplishment of some selfish end, dole out a paltry sum for the erection of the new District school house, but this they do with the significant intimation that not the slightest claim can be made upon them for any such contribution. And what does such a notion necessarily lead to? It leads plainly to the reducing of the whole support of the education of the District to some twelve or fifteen families out of the twenty-five or thirty, and these oftentimes the least able in the district to support schools. Is it then to be wondered at that in a third of the legal school Districts in the Province, there are either no school houses at all, or, if there are, they are utterly untenable, save during a few months in the heat of summer; or, that in a third more the schools should be in session scarcely the half of the year? And what is to be done to remedy this state of things, to rouse these parties to take any interest in the matter? Will appeals to their benevolence, their patriotism or their christian philanthropy prove of any avail? Or, failing in these, will the most palpable demonstrations of the innumerable indirect benefits which they and their property will derive from the sound and thorough education of the children in their midst, be productive of a more salutary influence? Alas! we fear, that these and similar pleadings will be allowed to pass away, like the idle wind, unheeded and unfelt; and that nought will produce the desired result but a direct and immediate appeal to their selfishness—their pockets. Let such be compelled by the law of the land to contribute according to the value of their property towards this object, and we guarantee an immediate revolution in all their views and feelings regarding the education of the young around them. Then will the rich old Bachelors and the venerable grey-headed Patriarchs manifest the deepest concern in education as regards both its quantity and quality—and this concern instead of decaying or dying will be but deepened and extended by every subsequent annual

visit of the collector, and all this simply because they have so much involved, so much at stake. Say not that this is a low and secular and grovelling view to take of the whole subject. Granting it to be so, we ask, Is it sinful? We trow not. And if it is not sinful, and if there is no other way by which, in the present imperfect state of humanity, the same result can be reached, then we hold that it is perfectly warrantable to betake ourselves to it, and the sooner, the better,—the better for the Province, the better for the rising generation, the better for all parties concerned.

REASON 2nd.—*Direct taxation for the support of our common schools will aid largely in securing the adequate amount of education; in other words, it will vastly increase the quantity.*

That every child born in a professedly Christian country possesses an indefeasible right to a common school education and that it is the bounden duty of every such country to make provision therefor; and not only so, but to see that every schoolable child, that is every child between five and sixteen years is actually receiving it, are propositions which however imperfectly carried out are all but universally admitted in theory. To attain this state of things, a fifth part of the population would require to be at school, and that not for five or six or seven but for ten months in the year. In these respects Nova Scotia is sadly deficient. From the utter want of machinery to obtain anything like a reliable body of statistics, we cannot pronounce with absolute certainty in the case; but we fear that there are not more than an eighth of our population at school, and that the average period of attendance of each scholar does not exceed six or seven months in the year. We venture to assert that neither in winter nor summer are there more than two thirds of all the schools actually in session. It is in this latter aspect, that we consider our educational condition as specially deplorable, and as demanding the immediate application of some remedial measure. If the average period of attendance of those who are actually at school, does not exceed six or seven months in the year, it is but too plain that their education must be so limited and circumscribed as to be of comparatively small practical benefit in after life, either for their own progressive improvement or for the benefit of their fellow creatures. Now it is our decided conviction, that direct taxation would operate very beneficially in obviating this state of things. It could not fail to add largely to the number of children attending school—in all probability, a third more in the course of two or three years. It has done so in Upper Canada and in other countries where it has been fairly tried; and we do not see why it should fail in producing equal if not greater results in Nova Scotia. But we believe

that such a measure would operate still more extensively upon the length of time and regularity of attendance at school. Is it at all likely that people after paying for a boon will not avail themselves of its full benefit, and avail themselves to an extent exactly proportional to its cost? Not to do so would be to act in diametric opposition to their usual procedure in other undertakings and pursuits. The interest awakened by the application of the money principle would also naturally direct attention to the advantages of a thorough education and call forth a determined effort to obtain it; and for this it would soon be found that something more was necessary than soundness and excellence of system, or a well equipped class of teachers, even the regularity and punctuality of attendance on the part of the scholars. And if these are the effects of the application of this principle, if the impost of a tax would secure the attendance of at least a third more scholars, and give an education vastly more efficient and useful; surely no one possessed of a spark of humanity, of patriotism or of christianity, no one who looks at education in its transcendent results, individually or relatively, could fail to hail its introduction or begrudge for a moment its payment. Such a measure would do more for the prosperity of Nova Scotia than the richest mines of California or Australia have done for their respective countries.

REASON 3rd.—*This method of supporting schools will also enhance their quality.*

If the quantity of education given is sadly defective, much more is its quality. This is owing to a great variety of causes:—such as, the smallness of some school districts, and the mal-assortment of others, the number of schools in the District in direct opposition to the present school Bill—necessarily reducing the number of children in attendance to a mere handful and frittering down to a very trifle all the available resources of school support,—the utter inadequacy of the teacher's salary and his consequent lack of literary and professional qualifications, as well as his frequent changes from place to place;—the supineness and careless indifference of too many parents with the irregularity of the attendance of the children; and the months if not sometimes the years intervening between the leaving off of one teacher and the commencing of the operations of his successor—these and similar causes combine in rendering the quality of the education of two thirds of the schools as low as can well be imagined. And in addition to all these, and as one of the direct results of the above mentioned causes, many of the most enlightened, the best educated and the most influential of the parents withdraw their children altogether from the common school of the district and send them to schools where they will receive a higher style of education, transferring thereto

all their educational interest, and leaving the whole local affairs to the management of a few individuals, devoid alike of the means and ability of doing so with any measure of success.

The compulsory assessment would alter, in this respect, the whole face of things. All being obliged to contribute, according to their means, the rich as well as the poor, the educated as well as the uneducated, they would feel the necessity of exerting themselves to the uttermost and uniting their energies to obtain an efficient school in the district—such a school, in fact, as would lay the foundation of intellectual and moral culture for any sphere of life, for any business or profession. The plan we have already briefly indicated would soon provide every District with a commodious schoolhouse, the necessary furniture and apparatus. The next step would be to procure a qualified and suitable schoolmaster for the situation, and here comparatively little difficulty would be experienced. The Trustees would now be prepared not only to hold out a competent remuneration, but without the least fear or apprehension that their doing so would involve them in any personal risk or liability. With such an equipment, a higher appreciation of a more elevated education would grow apace and would speedily pervade all ranks and degrees. The attendance of the children would gradually increase, and the very idea of having the schoolhouse door shut except during the usual vacation period, would soon be considered as savouring of semi-barbarism. In consequence of the number of scholars and the regular and sufficient supply of the necessary means and the growing appreciation of a still higher standard of education, the proper steps would speedily be taken for graded schools,—Primary, Intermediate and High;—male and female teachers would straightway be engaged; a thorough classification of the scholars effected; and the whole establishment put into working order. Who can fail to perceive the high toned style of such an education, or over-estimate the benefits flowing from the division of labour among the teachers, the entire devotement of their time and energies to two or three classes instead of ten or a dozen,—the real development of the mental powers of the scholars by the communication of wholesome instruction,—the feeding of the higher departments of the school by the lower, in consequence of the same system being pursued in all? &c., &c. Thus the lower and middle classes would obtain the best possible education for their children; the higher classes would get in their own immediate neighbourhood as good an education as they could find anywhere abroad, at one fourth the expense, and with the immense advantage of their children being all the while under the parental roof, for which the finest Boarding establishment however well or domestically arranged, could never compensate.

REASON 4th.—*Again, this method of supporting the common schools of the land, is the cheapest as well as the most efficient.*

We are aware that the very mention of the word cheapness in educational matters, falls like music on the ears of not a few. Ignorant of what education really is, and, therefore, incapable of realizing its results, either in reference to man personally or collectively; and yet feeling a desire to be like their neighbours and to give their children such an amount of education as that they shall be able to shift for themselves, their grand aim seems to be to get it as cheap as they can. Accordingly, when the teacher presents himself, they enquire, not so much after his credentials as his price, and the fact of his professing to teach at a lower rate than those around forms the highest possible recommendation. Never, we believe, was there a more egregious perversion of the term. As in everything else, as in every other marketable commodity, the best, whatever the cost, is always in the long run, the cheapest, it is pre-eminently so in the matter of education. If the grand end of education is the growth—the harmonious growth of all the parts of the child, if it is so to educate him as that he shall be able to educate himself, so to put him on the road as that he shall go on in endless progressive expansiveness and developement, intellectually and morally; then, who can estimate its magnitude, what price too great for its purchase, what genius too lofty, what erudition too extensive for its accomplishment! And is not this after all the only education worthy of the name, worthy of the dignity of our nature, worthy of the ennobling destiny that is awaiting us? If this end is not attained, the education is comparatively valueless, and you may put on it any price you please; but if it is, its price is far above rubies, and no earthly treasure can be offered as an equivalent for it.

And yet we do desiderate an economical common school education, as economical as is consistent with efficiency; and this just because of our very anxiety for its universality. Are not the minds of the children of the poor as susceptible of cultivation as those of the rich, as capable of drinking in as large a draught of enjoyment from the awaking of their higher powers, as able to do as much in the service of God and of mankind? Surely, then, every plan should be devised, every measure resorted to, every pains taken and every sacrifice made to provide for all and sundry in every community, such an education as will place them on the royal road of self improvement—such, in fact, as may and ought to be had at all our common schools—and cheapness is one of the means most likely to effectuate an end so devoutly to be desired.—And here we have another argument in favor of compulsory assess-

ment for the support of education. All the accompaniments of carrying into effect such a scheme, such as the enlargement of school Districts, the classification and grading of schools, the higher appreciation of education generally, &c., will have the tendency of diminishing the number of teachers, and yet increasing by one-third, if not by one-half, the number of children receiving instruction. And who does not see that this must cheapen and cheapen largely the general cost, and that in perfect consistency with, in the full working out of, a more efficient system of education.

In confirmation of this view of the case, Dr Ryerson, chief Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada, thus writes:—"I will select the example of one district rather better than an average specimen; and the same mode of reasoning will apply to every district in Upper Canada and with the same results. In one District there were reported 200 schools in operation in 1848; the average time of keeping open the schools was eight months; the average salaries of teachers was £45 7s. 1d, the total amount of the money available for the teachers' salaries, including the Legislative Grant, Council Assessment and Material Bills was £7,401 18s. 4½; the whole number of pupils between the ages of five and sixteen years on the school Register 9147; the total number of children between those ages resident in the District, 20,000; cost per pupil for eight months, about sixteen shillings. Here it will be observed that more than one-half of the children of school age in the District were not attending any school. Now, suppose the schools be kept open the whole year instead of two thirds of it; suppose the male and female teachers to be equal in number, and the salaries of the former to average £60, and those of the latter £40; suppose the 20,000 children to be in the schools instead of 9147 of them. The whole sum required for the salaries of Teachers would be £10,000,—the cost per pupil would be less than 10s.—less than 5s. per inhabitant—which would be reduced still farther by deducting the amount of the Legislative School Grant."

The above statement is just as applicable to Nova Scotia as it is to Canada, and proves to a demonstration that the assessment principle would reduce the cost of the common schools at least one-third, though the attendance of scholars were doubled.

REASON 5th.—*The principle for which we are contending will also operate beneficially in the matter of local supervision.*

It is impossible for the inhabitants of a District to carry on their educational affairs without representatives, and, accordingly, the law makes provision for the appointment of local Trustees—and who that knows

anything of our educational condition is ignorant how much depends on their instrumentality? Generally speaking it will be found, that the education of the District waxes or wanes according to the efficiency or inefficiency of these Trustees; and when tried by this criterion, our state is low enough. Out of about a thousand school Districts there are not more than the half that have regular Trustees, and, even of these, perhaps, not more than three hundred legally appointed. And how few of those in office really discharge the duties prescribed by law, the great majority contenting themselves with merely signing the Teachers' Returns when presented to them. And how often are these documents signed, knowing that the people have not fulfilled their engagement to the teacher, or paid the sum subscribed. Much of this state of things is plainly to be ascribed to the imperfections that cling to the present system. How often, for example, are these Trustees themselves obliged to make up the deficiencies in the subscription list; and this even after they have been subjected to no ordinary amount of drudgery and toil in their endeavours to gather in the outstanding debts—need we be surprised that the office should be in such discredit, or that so many of those lawfully appointed, demur to act, except in the matter indicated above. Indeed, the wonder is, that any, in these circumstances, should undertake the duties of the office at all.

The assessment principle would do much to remedy this deplorable state of things. There would then be no such difficulty, as there is now, to get the most eligible parties to act as Trustees, or to carry out the full terms of their instructions. They would be under no risk or liability to make up the defalcations of others; for all would be compelled to pay according to their means. The growing interest taken in the education of the District, would not only render their duties light and easy, but the office would become one of honour and respectability. They would labour, and labour zealously and perseveringly in the discharge of their duties, feeling satisfied that their labours would be duly appreciated, that they would not only have the approval of their own conscience but the gratitude of the wise and good around them. Nothing delighted me so much, on occasion of my educational visit to the United States, as the spectacle of so many men of business, some of them princely merchants, gratuitously devoting so much of their time and energy to the furtherance of the interests of the schools in their neighbourhood; and all because of the high estimate in which education is held among their fellow countrymen, as constituting the very bulwark of their republican institutions. Were a modified form of taxation in-

roduced into Nova Scotia, a complete revolution would take place the matter of educational supervision.

REASON 6th.—*The Teachers too would share largely in the benefits accruing from the adoption of this principle.*

The saying 'The Teacher makes the school' is not less trite than true, and cannot be too oft repeated. Let the internal and external systems of education be what they may, no justice can be done to the one or the other without a staff of thoroughly qualified teachers,—teachers imbued with the spirit of their office and who have sat at the feet of the Great Teacher of Nazareth. To secure, retain and extend such a class of teachers, two things are indispensably necessary. 1st. They must have an adequate remuneration for their services; and 2nd., they must have every encouragement in the way of stimulating to higher attainment in their calling. Now I have no hesitation in avowing my conviction that the teachers generally in Nova Scotia do not receive an adequate remuneration, whether we regard their avocation in its own intrinsic importance, or in its relation to other pursuits or undertakings. True there are here, as in almost every case, some honourable exceptions. There are some localities where the people exert themselves most nobly in raising a fair emolument to the teacher, and, there are others where they evince a proportional indifference and callousness. The grand evil, however, in the whole matter of emolument, is the difficulty experienced in too many cases in realizing the amount promised and subscribed. Then, as to the second point,—the holding out of sufficient encouragement to the teachers, so as to stimulate them to greater diligence in the acquisition of higher professional qualifications—they have, in my opinion, still greater room for murmuring and complaining. Here nothing, literally nothing is done for the benefit of teachers as public officers, either in the way of rewarding real merit, or of impelling to higher attainment. A teacher in this Province may make the most rapid strides in all the departments of his profession, and at the end of six years, he may, in all probability, receive the same endowment, as he did at the commencement, or even less. Or, a teacher may attend the Normal School and expend both time and means, £50 or £60, to qualify himself for a more efficient discharge of duty and may have received the highest honours of that institution, and yet his share of the public money may be exactly the same as that of the adjoining teacher, whose professional acquirements have not cost him a day or a farthing.

Now the principle of assessment will most materially affect both these points. It will equalize the endowment all over the Province

and above all, it will secure the full payment of the sum promised. It will also indirectly affect the latter. It will involve a thorough grading or classification of the teachers, and this will demand competitive trials both in scholarship and in teaching powers; and thus elicit real merit in every department.

REASON 7th.—*This mode of supporting education will tend to diffuse a spirit of unity and mutual affection among the inhabitants of the District.*

It is lamentable to observe the heartburnings, disputes, and divisions that but too frequently take place in settlements in connection with our present educational system. Sometimes the higher classes are seen contending with the lower; at other times, the inhabitants of one extremity of the District, with those of the other,—it may be about the school-site, or the teacher; and, at other times, politics and denominationalism creep in with all their train of evils and leaven not a few with their baneful influence. Thus too often is the District torn in pieces, and the cause of education, and the interests of the young sacrificed.

Now, though much of this discord may be ascribed to the corrupt propensities of humanity, much, very much, we are persuaded, is owing to the present arrangement of things. Not only is there nought fitted to arrest the outgoing of such a spirit but every thing seems adapted to foment and foster it. The whole system savours of selfishness. In many Districts there are comparatively few who take any interest in the cause of education at all; and even those who do, frequently manifest nought but a spirit of selfish isolation, of worldly aggrandizement. They profess to take a lively interest in the cause of education, but this is but too evidently confined within the precincts of their own domestic circle. They cheerfully aid in the erection of a new schoolhouse and liberally contribute towards the support of a duly qualified teacher, but all because they have two or three children to be educated; and it would neither suit their worldly plans nor their family pride, to send them abroad without such an amount of scholarship as would enable them to earn a decent livelihood or, perchance, raise themselves to temporal affluence and respectability. Such is the nature of their educational zeal, demonstrating but too plainly, that it is selfish, isolated, grovelling and degrading to the very core; which, instead of strengthening the social bond, but loosens and rends it asunder.

Let, however, the compulsory system of supporting schools be introduced, let all be bound to pay in proportion to the value of their property; and, we are persuaded, that some at least of these evils would be

removed. The fact of each contributing according to his means and not according to the number of children he has to educate, would naturally beget an interest in the general cause of education; and thereby generate and diffuse a fine spirit of mutual affection and of fraternal harmony among all ranks and degrees and parties. With the same objects, aims and interests, the social bond of the District would be strengthened, and those strifes and divisions, so injurious to society and so disastrous to the cause of education, be, to a great extent, averted.

REASON 8th.—*This principle is in consonance with the purest equity, and the strictest justice.*

We have now looked at our subject in all its direct effects upon the various parties concerned. We have considered it in its bearing on the nation at large, and we have seen how well fitted it is to arouse an interest in the general cause of the education of the young. We have discussed the principle of direct assessment, too, as it affects the matter of quantity, quality and economy, and here again have we been brought to the conclusion, that it is the most likely way of securing a universal, an efficient and a cheap education. We have gone farther still and we have contemplated its effects upon Trustees, Teachers and the people at large in their social relationship—and here again we have found it in every way salutary and profitable.

We might leave the whole subject here and allow the observations already advanced to produce their legitimate influence, but we cannot. We would fain for a little take you to a higher vantage ground and bid you look at our principle in the light of the soundest ethics and of the plainest dictates of revelation.

And surely no proposition can be more in accordance with the law of equity, with the highest principles of moral philosophy than this:—*“That as the property of all is benefited by the education of all, so ought the property of all to be taxed according to its value, for the accomplishment of this objects.* In speaking of education in this connection, it is right to state that we use the term in its most exalted sense, denoting the training of the whole man,—the development of all the parts of his component nature, physical, intellectual and moral, and that by the most appropriate appliances. Such an education universally diffused in any community, will infallibly secure prosperity in its highest acceptance, and one essential element in this prosperity must be the enhanced value of property in general. The veriest tyro in political economy knows that the real advancement of any country, depends on the intelligence, the skill, the industrial and moral habits of its inhabitants. It matters comparatively little as to the nature or extent of

that country's territory. Let it present the poorest and most unpromising appearance—the barren heath or the craggy rock—if the inhabitants are signalized by the qualities above specified, they will in course of time convert the wilderness into a garden, the rock into a mine of gold. And this will be no empty, hollow show, no mere external gilding, no phantom form. All will be reality. The garden will produce satisfying fruit, the gold will stand the test of the severest crucible. Or, to speak without a figure, pauperism, and vice, and crime will, to the extent to which these qualities are diffused, be comparatively unknown, and taxation, for their support or punishment, be but slightly felt. All will be lasting, substantial gain. And the result of all this state of things will be the increased and the ever increasing value of property. It signifies little as to the nature of that property, whether it be the house or the field, the loom or the cloth, the ship or the freight, the personal or the real,—or as to its extent, for all will be benefited,—the labourer, the tradesman, the farmer, the manufacturer, the merchant, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned. And what is the instrumentality or agency by which a population possessed of these qualities shall be reared and perpetuated and extended? It is education, and education alone,—education universal and efficient, such an education as will embrace all the component parts of our nature,—as will consist not merely in the imparting of knowledge, but in the training up of the young in the way they should go. The connection between a sound and thorough system of popular education and national prosperity in the highest sense of that term, requires no argumentation of ours; it is written as with a sunbeam on the page of past history; it is palpable in the present condition of the civilized world. “Take any two neighbourhoods,” says Dr Ryerson, “equal in advantage of situation and natural fertility of soil—the one inhabited by an ignorant, and therefore unenterprising, grovelling, if not disorderly population; the other peopled with a well educated, and, therefore, enterprising, intelligent and industrious class of inhabitants. The difference in the value of all real estate in the two neighbourhoods is ten, if not an hundred fold, greater than the amount of school tax that has ever been imposed upon it—and yet it is the school that makes the difference in the two neighbourhoods; and the larger the field of experiment, the more marked will be the difference. Hence in Free school countries, where the experiment has been so tested as to become a system, there are no warmer advocates of it than men of the largest property and the greatest intelligence—the profoundest scholars and the ablest statesmen.” Who that has read the account of the Ragged

Schools in the City of Edinburgh, as recently laid before the *Social Science Association* meeting in Glasgow, under the Presidentship of Lord Brougham, without perceiving the reality and glory of the connection of which we are now speaking—in ten years diminishing the number of juvenile delinquents from 550 to 130. An education, however, that will be productive of such results nationally, must be universal and efficient, and this, we are persuaded, can be secured by assessment alone. And who can be so blinded to his own interest as to repudiate such a principle or demur at the payment of his just proportion? Who can be so brimful of predilection and of prejudice as to deny the righteousness of the proposition? “*That as the property of all is benefited by the education of all, so is it right and proper that, for the securing of this end, the property of all be taxed.*”

REASON 9th.—*But we proceed a step further, and maintain that this method of supporting schools is not only consonant with the law of equity but with the true principles and ends of civil government.*

Are any natural rights more fundamental and sacred than those of children to such an education as will fit them for their duties as citizens? If a parent is amenable to the law who takes away a child's life by violence, or wilfully exposes it to starvation, does he less violate the inherent rights of the child in exposing it to moral and intellectual starvation? It is noble to recognize this inalienable right of infancy and youth, by providing for them the means of the education to which they are entitled, not as children of particular families, but as children of our race and country. And how perfectly does it harmonize with the true principles of civil government for every man to support the laws and all institutions designed for the common good, according to his ability. This is an acknowledged principle of all just taxation. And it is the true principle of universal education. It links every man to his fellow men in the obligation of the common interests; it wars with that greatest, meanest foe of all social advancement—the isolation of selfish individuality; and implants and nourishes the spirit of true patriotism, by making each man feel that the welfare of the whole society is his welfare—that collective interests are first in order of importance and duty, and that separate interests are second.

REASON 10th.—*But we take you a step higher still, and maintain that the principle involved in the assessment method of supporting education, is in perfect accordance with the teachings of revelation.*

The Almighty Proprietor and Disposer of all things, hath committed to every individual of the human species certain talents or gifts, with specific instructions as to their use or application, and, with the distinct

stipulation, that, at a certain period, He will demand an account of our stewardship and will reward accordingly. These talents or gifts are exceedingly diversified both in kind and degree, and they are so for the wisest and most benign purposes, whether as relating to the duties of the first or the second table of the moral law. More especially, is this diversity admirably fitted to furnish an opportunity for the reciprocating process of giving and receiving, and thereby of cementing the social bond, the bond of christian love. And what is the grand principle laid down in Sacred Scripture for our guidance in this interchange of giving and receiving. It is just that every one give according to his ability. "As every man hath received so let him give." If the Almighty hath entrusted to him ten talents, He will demand an account of the ten talents; if five, of five; if one, of one. "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath and not according to that he hath not." If, for example, the Almighty hath crowned our agricultural or commercial undertakings with success, and if He requires a certain portion of the means or substance thereby accumulated for any philanthropic purpose, then it is plain that in harmony with this principle, we ought to give bountifully. If on the contrary, our undertaking has proved a failure, in that case, it is not less clear, that we ought to give sparingly. In the meting out of our own means for the promotion of any object, the welfare of the human family, whether temporally or eternally, intellectually or morally, much must depend on the importance of the object, as contrasted with others, whether we give much or little. If the object be for the advancement of the education of the young, then who can scan its magnitude, who can estimate its effects. You may range throughout all the Associations or Corporations of individuals that have for their object the amelioration of the human species; you may take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost ends of the earth, and contemplate man in every stage of civilization, in every phase of condition, in every complexion of character; and you may consider all the schemes or measures which his benevolence or charity has devised for the alleviation or removal of all the ills to which man is heir, nowhere will you find a sphere of usefulness so attractive, so promising, so encouraging, so fraught with blessings to the human race, so deeply and extensively affecting the interests of man both in time and eternity—of man individually—of man collectively—as that of the education of the young. Surely, Ah! surely, such an ennobling object may well prompt every one who has a spark of humanity, of patriotism, of philanthropy, or of christianity in his breast, to give according to his ability, aye, and beyond his power.

Such are the effects and the inherent excellence of the principle for which we have been pleading. We think we have satisfactorily shown its soundness, whether weighed in the scale of equity, of patriotism, or of christianity. We think, too, that from its effects, we have established its incalculable value in the great cause of the education of the young. But some one may say "All that has been advanced is but supposition and conjecture, and however forcible and clear the reasoning may be it is nothing but words after all; it has never been subjected to the touchstone of experiment." Now it is this very circumstance that imparts a stability, a culminating glory to our whole argument. Never, we believe has a principle been more thoroughly tested, or come forth from the fiery ordeal more unscathed and with brighter radiance. Upwards of two hundred years ago, and but a few years after the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers on the American Continent, when the entire population consisted of not more than 21,000 and their external means were small, aye, when they were exposed to the most severe privations and dangers, did the colony of Massachusetts conceive the magnificent idea of a free and universal education for the people; and, amid all their poverty, they stinted themselves to a still scantier pittance; amid all their toils they imposed on themselves still more burdensome labours; amid all their perils they braved still greater dangers, that they might find the time and the means to reduce their grand conception to practice. Two divine ideas filled their great hearts,—their duty to God and to posterity. For the one they built the Church; for the other they opened the School. And, however great the innovation upon all pre-existing policy and usage, time has but rectified its soundness and illustrated its benign and blessed effects. Two centuries now proclaim it to be as wise as it was courageous, as beneficent as it was disinterested. Look at the influence and tendency of the system in the case of the New England States. Where a people on the face of the earth to be found more signalized for their general intelligence and enterprise, their self-reliance and economy, their industry, their social order and morality—than are the inhabitants generally of these States. Look more particularly at the State of Massachusetts. Why is it distinguished above all the other New England States for its advancement in all mechanical and manufacturing skill, in all literary and scientific institutions, in all useful discoveries and inventions, in all the refinement and comfort of civilization? Why, but just because it was the pioneer in all educational improvement, and especially in the imposition of a tax for the support of Free Schools. Look again at the case of Upper Canada. How often has it been stated by Dr. Ryerson that since the introduction of this

system some ten or twelve years ago, education, both in its quantity and efficiency, has increased fourfold. But the most remarkable fact connected with its history is, that, in no state or city where the Free School System has been fairly tried, has it ever been abandoned. What a testimony this to the excellence of the system! How vastly does it transcend the panegyrics of a hundred volumes!

Although we have already extended these remarks far beyond our original designed limits, we must still notice a few of the more prominent objections urged against the scheme we have been advocating.

OBJECTION 1st.—*Some object to it because they do not see how teachers are entitled to any other guarantee for the payment of their salary or wages than any other labourer, or mechanic, or man of business.* The ground they take is this:—The teacher engages with the parents or guardians of his pupils to educate them for the time being at a certain rate per annum, the parents, if the teacher performs his engagement, are obliged to pay the sum promised, and, if they do not, he may sue them in a court of law. The whole of this objection evidently proceeds upon the idea that education is to be conducted on the voluntary and not on the national system, and by consequence that the teachers are to be regarded in the light of private adventurers and not as public officers. With such a view of education we have no sympathy. On the contrary, we raise against it our most unequivocal and decided protest. We hold it to be far more the duty and interest of the State, as such, to countenance and make provision for a national system of education than it is to support a police or constabulary establishment. No nation can subsist without education, and no other means can supply the adequate amount. Look at England with its Voluntary System, aided and abetted by munificent Parliamentary Grants, and, after thirty years of huge struggle it presents the appalling spectacle of nearly three millions of children capable of attending school actually receiving no instruction at all. The Belgian Netherlands tried this plan in 1830, and what was the result? In five years, educational desolation spread throughout the kingdom, and the Legislature had to interfere to prevent the people sinking into semi-barbarism. We know of no party supporting this view but a small section of the Independents in England, and we need not travel out of that country to see how completely utopian it is.

OBJECTION 2nd.—*Many maintain that whilst such a method of supporting education may be very suitable for the States or Canada, it is altogether unsuitable for Nova Scotia.*

Of course these individuals are bound to show precisely in what the

dissimilarity between the countries referred to, consists, so as to substantiate the position that what is suitable in the one case, is unsuitable in the other. This, however, they cautiously avoid, contenting themselves with mere general statements or vague assertions. We maintain that in all essential points, affecting the matter of taxation, these countries are, as near as may be, in the same situation. When Massachusetts passed in 1647, the direct taxation principle, it was a British colony; so was Upper Canada when it did the same, and so is Nova Scotia. The inhabitants of these colonies are, in the main, sprung from the same stock, from men signalized for their high-toned patriotism, for their exalted views of civil liberty, founded as these views were on the only infallible standard of faith and morals. There exists, too, in these countries the same variety of religious denominations, and of political parties. If there is any difference between these countries and Nova Scotia, it argues far greater capabilities and facilities on the part of the latter to carry out our principle.

OBJECTION 3rd.—*Another objection, urged principally by the higher classes, is, that the Common Schools are of such a low and inefficient character, that they—the higher classes—cannot send their children to them, and therefore it is unreasonable that they should be taxed for their support.*

Granting, for the sake of argument, that the common schools are really of this description, what, it may be asked, has mainly contributed to render them so,—what but the conduct of these objectors themselves? Instead of encouraging, in every possible way, the common schools of the District, they have sent their children elsewhere, to what they considered select schools, and thus left the support of these schools to a few families and these not the most competent, whether in respect to means or influence or educational qualifications, to do so. Let all and sundry in the District come forward and give their cordial support to these schools, according to their capabilities, and, so far as the elementary branches of education are concerned, they will soon rise to the highest excellence. Let a thorough system of physical, intellectual, and moral training be introduced into these schools, and let duly qualified teachers be appointed to preside over them, and a few months will elevate their whole standard, both externally and internally; and not only so, but the schools thus conducted will produce the most benign and hallowing influence over the whole future career of those who receive their instructions and their training.

But, supposing that the higher classes in the District still stand aloof from its common school, and, instead of countenancing and encouraging,

depreciate its character, and, by their conduct, lessen its influence, are they thereby released from all obligation of contributing to its support? Not one whit; and that simply because the support of the education which is essential for the good of all, should be made obligatory upon all.

OBJECTION 4th.—Others object to our principle and maintain that it is unfair to be obliged to contribute towards the maintenance of schools from which they derive no immediate benefit.

If this objection is well founded, let it be carried out and made of universal application, and what would be the result? To maintain and act out such a view, would render the impost of taxation for any object whatever next to an impossibility, and, by consequence, sap the very foundation of civil government. On the same ground, might one and another come forward and plead exemption from paying for the support of the administration of justice, for they do not patronize either the civil or the criminal courts; another, for the erection of a jail, because he derives no direct benefit therefrom; and another, for the upholding of a Lunatic Asylum, because neither he nor his relatives stand in want of any such place of protection. In all good governments, the interests of the majority are the rule of procedure; and in all free governments the voice of the majority determines what shall be done by the whole population for the common interests, without reference to isolated individual cases of advantage or disadvantage, of inclination or disinclination. Surely the common schools involve the common interests of the nation far more than Jails, or Bridewells or Penitentiaries, and, therefore, it is perfectly justifiable for the state to impose a tax upon all for their support.

But the objection is groundless because it proceeds on an assumption in direct antagonism to the truth. It assumes that none are benefited by common schools save those who patronise them, by sending children to them. This is the lowest, narrowest, and most selfish view of the subject, and indicates a mind contracted and grovelling in the extreme. It is quite true that Bachelors, Parents whose children are already educated, and such like, do not derive any immediate benefit from the common schools of the District; but to argue from this that they do not derive any benefit, is just as absurd as to suppose, that none derive any benefit from the administration of Jurisprudence but those directly engaged therein, such as Judges, Lawyers, Jailors, Police, &c.; or that none get any advantage from a Railroad passing through a country, but the Car Manufacturers, Engine Drivers, Station Masters, and other officials of the establishment. We reiterate the sentiment which we have

elaborated at length in the body of this address, that there is not an individual in the settlement who is not benefited, less or more, by the common school, and that in exact proportion to the stake involved. The objection manifestly assumes, as a fact, a glaring untruth, and argues accordingly. Our position thus remains untouched.—“That as the property of all is benefited by the education of all, so ought the property of all, in proportion to its value, to be taxed for the accomplishment of this object.

OBJECTION 5th.—*But others object to the scheme we have propounded because it does not go far enough. “Let the whole sum,” say they, “requisite for the support of the common schools be raised by direct taxation, and we are prepared to give you our cordial support.”*

So say we. Nay, we are ready to maintain that such a taxation would prove in every way advantageous to the cause of education, and that the contributors to this fund would not, at the end of the year, be one whit the poorer but all the richer. Still there may be some, there may be a majority of the friends of educational taxation unprepared to go this length, and, therefore, it would be inexpedient at the outset to attempt such a measure. We are persuaded, however, that such will be the felt advantages of the introduction of the assessment wedge to the extent we have indicated, that in the course of five years there will be not only a disposedness, but a demand on the part of the rateable population themselves to go the full length. In the mean time, let the friends of education and advancement be united, and insist on the immediate payment of a first installment. Let the Legislature grant, as usual, a third part out of the public Treasury, and enact that another third be raised by County compulsory assessment, and let the other third in its mode of exaction, be left to the option of the people; and we have no fear of the result.

And now, in conclusion, I commend the whole matter to your most serious consideration. If I have satisfactorily made out and substantiated the various points submitted, you cannot fail to perceive how deeply and extensively the carrying into effect even a modified system of taxation, will affect the whole of our educational condition. Though, strictly speaking, the matter appertains only to the exterior departments of education, it influences every other—quantity, quality and cheapness, the parent and the child, the teacher and the taught, the employer and the employed, the individual recipient, the state and the church; and, therefore, by moving in this matter, you are using the most powerful means for touching the mainspring of our educational machine and remodelling the whole of this branch of the public service,—lying as it does at the foundation of all the others. And in what way can you lend your aid in

conferring a greater boon on the land of your nativity or adoption? In what way can you more extensively promote the highest, the best interests of your fellow men? In what field of christian enterprize can you dedicate your time and your energies, with greater prospect of success, with a nobler recompense of reward before you? On the ground of our common patriotism, philanthropy and christianity, I implore your sympathy, co-operation and support. Ponder the subject on its own merits. Be nobly ambitious and soar into a higher region than that of a selfish, isolated, and grovelling, worldly aggrandizement—than that even of a political or ecclesiastical partizanship; and look at it in the light and glory of the human mind, of revelation, and of eternity.

ALEXANDER FORRESTER.

Form of Petition.

I beg leave to append the form of a Petition to the Legislature respecting the matter discussed in the foregoing address. Of course that Petition may be modified according to circumstances.

Unto the Honorable the Members of the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia in Parliament convened—

The Petition of the undersigned _____ of _____

Humbly sheweth,

That your Petitioners are deeply sensible of the vast importance of the common schools of the Province, and of the necessity of every legal provision being made for their maintenance, so as to secure the universal education of the young in our midst.

That your Petitioners are thoroughly persuaded that, until a complete (or partial or modified) system of direct compulsory taxation for the support of the same, be passed into an enactment by the Legislature, this end will not be accomplished.

May it therefore please your Honourable House to take the foregoing premises into consideration, and pass such a measure, as, in your wisdom you may deem advisable ; and your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

