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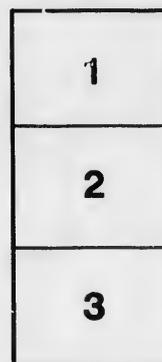
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SCHEME

PROPOSED BY THE

CITY COMMISSIONERS OF SCHOOLS,

WITH THE VIEW

OF BRINGING ABOUT A BETTER REGULATED

AND MORE UNIFORM

SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN HALIFAX,

BY MEANS OF ASSESSMENT.

1000

250

1125

62-10

800

1250

1250

150

1750

1500

7500

875

The Education of the Poor 1500
The Education of the Poor 3000
The Education of the Poor 7500
The Education of the Poor 13750
The Education of the Poor 875
The Education of the Poor 1250

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HALIFAX, N.S.

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SCHEME, &c.

The Commissioners of Schools for the City of Halifax, in fulfilling the duties of their Commission, soon after their appointment, instituted a minute enquiry into the present condition of Education in Halifax; and regret to state that in point, both of quantity and quality, they found matters in many respects deficient.

It is generally admitted, that in every well-conditioned community, there ought to be, at least, one in every six of the population, receiving education. On the continent of Europe, in those countries where due attention is paid by the state to the cause of Education, this is the average proportion of Children at School. On the Continent of America, for example, in the States of Maine, New Hampshire, New York, Massachusetts, Vermont, Ohio, New Jersey, the number of children at School is much larger—averaging one, in every four. Now, in Halifax, even on a moderate computation, there cannot be more than 2,600 at School; which, on the supposition, that the whole population amounts to 26,000, gives about one in every ten, leaving 2000, or nearly a half of the children capable of receiving instruction, without education; and these, generally speaking of that class in the community, for which it is the bounden duty and interest of the state to care, and to provide with a good and sound education.

With some creditable exceptions, the Commissioners found the general style and character of the education given, of an inferior description, and not at all equal to the advanced spirit of the age. There is little or nothing in the shape of a general system, or of a uniformity of mode pursued, and thus the children in going from one school to another, and in advancing from a lower to a higher grade of instruction, are exposed to manifold disadvantages. Even the best qualified Teachers, in the present state of affairs, are, in a great measure, unable to do any thing like justice to their professional attainments, from the general irregularity of the attendance of the children, from the great dissimilarity and deficiency of books, from the want of suitable school-room accommodation, and above all, from one Teacher being oftentimes necessitated to carry on the various branches of education, in some instances, ranging from the elementary to the higher departments in Classics and Mathematics.

The Commissioners having ascertained the present state of matters, and, having to the best of their ability, apportioned the sum of Money placed at their disposal by the Legislature, have since had their attention mainly directed to the consideration of a remedy for meeting existing wants and imperfections, and have unanimously agreed to recommend to their fellow citizens, the following outline of a plan, which they believe, if fully and fairly worked, would be productive of great good in the whole matter of education.

1st. That a uniform system be adopted, with a thorough public supervision.

2nd. That a Normal Institution be established for the training of well qualified Teachers.

3rd. That provision be made for a more competent and regular remuneration of the Teachers, and

4th. That for the carrying out of these measures a general Assessment of the rateable inhabitants be resorted to.

For the accomplishment of this plan, it is proposed, that there shall be 12 District Schools, that is, two schools for each City Ward, the one, of a Primary, and the other of a more advanced character, with 4 Teachers for each School, 3 Male and 1 Female, that there shall be a Teacher for Drawing, and another for Music—who shall divide their instructions equally amongst all the Schools of the city ;—and that one of these District Schools in the most central situation shall serve all the purposes of a Normal Institution. Supposing that there is an average attendance of 300 children at each of these Schools, there would thus be provision made by the State for the education of 3,600 children, leaving about 1000 for private adventure schools. These schools, it is further proposed, shall be under the entire management of a City Board of Education, chosen by the rate-payers in each Ward. This Board shall act as Trustees, and have the full control and regulation of their affairs ; electing and dismissing School-masters, under certain conditions, choosing their own paid Secretary, &c. &c. This Secretary shall also discharge the duties of Superintendent of Education for the City of Halifax, and, under the direction of the Board, transmit periodical reports to the Government.

In the event of the above plan being carried into full operation, which it could not be, from the very nature of the case, for several years, the expenses in round numbers would be nearly as follows ;—

1. Salary of Teachers,	- - - - -	£5000
2. Interest, Insurance, &c. for Eight New Schools, (four of the present Public Schools being converted into District Schools)	- - - - -	400
3. Contingencies,	- - - - -	200
4. Normal School, (additional,)	- - - - -	200
5. Teachers of Music and Drawing,	- - - - -	300
6. School Books,	- - - - -	300
		<hr/>
	Total,	£6,400

However large this sum may appear, it is not nearly equal to the amount which the present defective mode costs. There are at present in Halifax about Seventy Teachers, and Sixty Schools, and the income of the former, and the rent of the latter, together with books, &c. can scarcely be less than £6800. Thus, with the present number of children in attendance, there will be a saving of £400, and when to this is added the education of 1000 more out of the 2000 children at present receiving no education, calculating at the same rate, there will be a saving of not less than £2400. But the pecuniary saving is only one of the benefits to be derived from this general plan. There are others far more valuable. These are such as the following: a fair proportion of the population receiving a first rate education, a uniformity of system, a proper status assigned to Teachers, due scope given to the professional qualifications of Teachers, in being provided with all the necessary materials, such as school accommodation, furniture, books, &c., the vast comfort and advantage to Teachers, from the certainty that their salaries will be regularly paid, the general results on the social and moral well being of the community at large, &c. &c.

But, as already stated, this scheme even under the most favourable circumstances, cannot be fully carried out for a few years, and therefore, the Commissioners would propose and recommend that during

the first two or three years, the Assessment shall not exceed the sum of £3,000; which sum shall be devoted to the establishment of Six Primary Schools in the different Wards of the City, one of which shall be erected into a Normal Institution, as soon as means are available for the purpose, it being understood, that, in the event of the Legislature, continuing the grant of £700, to the City of Halifax, out of the Public Treasury, the Assessment shall be thus far reduced.

In the course of 4 or 5 years the advanced schools might be commenced in the more central localities, which would in all probability add another £1000 to the Assessment; and so on, gradually, till the whole plan is put into operation. By this graduated scale, the burden would fall lightly at first on the ratepayers; the advantages become more and more apparent, as the scheme advanced towards completion, and the Board of Education would have time afforded for procuring the most efficient Teachers, either from their own Normal Institution or elsewhere.

As to the particular mode of levying the Assessment, the Commissioners would leave this matter entirely in the hands of the Municipal Authorities; acting under the sanction of the Legislature. They would however, beg to suggest, that the money thus raised be granted entirely for secular education, subject to such regulations concerning religious matters, as shall be deemed essential by the City Board for harmonizing a sound system, and obtaining the acquiescence of the various Christian denominations in the community.

The Commissioners at a meeting held on the 7th instant, having unanimously agreed to the foregoing proposal,—resolved, to recommend the same to their fellow citizens; and, with this view to transmit a

Copy to the City Authorities, earnestly soliciting their approbation and support ; and that no time be lost to petition the Legislature, that the Civic Authorities be empowered to levy an Assessment in the event of a majority of the rateable inhabitants approving of the scheme.

Signed on behalf of the Commissioners.

ROBERT WILLIS, D.D., CHAIRMAN.

The Commissioners have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th inst. in relation to the proposed scheme for the improvement of the City of London, and to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the City Authorities for their consideration. It is the duty of the Commissioners to advise you that the City Authorities have not yet expressed their opinion on the subject, and that it is necessary for you to petition the Legislature in order to obtain the necessary powers for the execution of the scheme. The Commissioners are desirous to see the scheme carried into effect as soon as possible, and they are confident that the City Authorities will be disposed to support it if they see the necessity of it. They are also desirous to see the scheme approved by the Legislature, and they are confident that the Legislature will be disposed to do so if they see the necessity of it. The Commissioners are therefore desirous to see you petition the Legislature as soon as possible, and they are confident that you will be successful in your petition.

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