The Educational System of the Province of Ontario, Canada

Millar John
THE

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

OF THE

PROVINCE OF ONTARIO,

CANADA.
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CANADA.

BY

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THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF ONTARIO.

ITS ORIGIN.

From the earliest settlement of Ontario, schools were established as the wants of the inhabitants required. The Legislature soon recognized the needs of the country, and made grants of land and money in aid of elementary, secondary, and superior education. Statutes were passed from time to time for the purpose of opening schools to meet the demands of the people. The sparsely settled condition of the Province delayed for a while the organization of the system. It was not until 1844 that the elementary schools were put on a comprehensive basis. In that year the Rev. Egerton Ryerson, LL.D., was appointed Chief Superintendent of Education, and the report which he presented to the House of Assembly sketched in an able manner the main features of the system of which he was the distinguished founder, and of which he continued for thirty-three years to be the efficient administrator. In 1876 the office of chief superintendent was abolished, and the schools of the Province placed under the control of a member of the Government with the title of Minister of Education. In this way they have been since administered, and such improvements as have been considered necessary have been made from time to time by means of amendments to the school law and regulations of the Education Department.

To trace the growth and development of our educational system would be to deal with a very interesting topic of Canadian history. In the following pages the object will be not to portray the past, however instructive, but to give the reader a sketch of the present system of education in Ontario, and to present especially those of its features which have been most prized. The list of institutions described does not include private or denominational schools or colleges. It is intended to give an account of the system only in so far as concerns educational institutions which are subject to Provincial control.

The system of education in Ontario may be said to combine the best features of the systems of several countries. To the Old World it is indebted for a large measure of its stability, uniformity and centralization; to the older settled parts of the New World for its popular nature, its flexibility and its democratic principles which have given, wherever desirable, local control and individual responsibility. From the State of New York we have borrowed the machinery of our schools; from Massachusetts the principle of local taxation; from Ireland our first series of text 1 (E.S.)