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J. Geoffrey Hall

Short Title

Egerton Ryerson and Some of His Critics

THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY OF EGERTON RYERSON, SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION FOR UPPER CANADA AND SOME CONTEMPORARY CRITICISMS OF THAT POLICY

By

J. Geoffrey Hall

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ABSTRACT

Egerton Ryerson's work at the beginning of his period as Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada received criticism and opposition. He knew precisely what kind of system of education he wanted to found and the ways he intended it to be organised and financed. It is claimed that, wherever Ryerson's intentions were in conflict with the views of his critics, he continued purposefully on his chosen way, ignoring or turning away all criticism.

The study is limited to the first decade of Ryerson's

Superintendency and to his work concerning the Common Schools. It considers Ryerson's intention to provide Christian education which would prepare children for life, citizenship and employment; the relationship of education and the community; attempts to introduce compulsory and free education, and Ryerson's work to improve pedagogy and the conditions in which it took place.

LA POLITIQUE D'ENSEIGNEMENT D'EGERTON RYERSON, SURINTENDANT DE L'INSTRUCTION PUBLIQUE POUR LE HAUT-CANADA ET QUELQUES CRITIQUES CONTEMPORAINES DE CETTE POLITIQUE

Par

J. Geoffrey Hall

Département des Fondements Sociaux
de l'Education
Université McGill
Maîtrise

mai, 1976

RESUME

L'oeuvre d'Egerton Ryerson, Surintendant de L'Instruction publique pour le Haut-Canada, se trouvait soumise à la critique et à l'opposition. Ryerson savait précisément quel genre de système d'enseignement il voulait établir et comment l'organiser et le financer. On se propose de montrer dans cette étude que, chaque fois que les buts de Ryerson entraient en conflit avec les opinions de ceux qui le critiquaient, Ryerson, tout en suivant résolument le chemin qu'il s'était fixé, écartait les critiques ou refusait d'y faire attention.

L'étude s'occupe des dix premières années de la surin-

tendance de Ryerson et de son travail dans la domaine des écoles communales (Common Schools). On étudie ses intentions de fournir une éducation chrétienne susceptible de préparer les enfants à la vie active, au marché du travail et à la vie sociale. On examine aussi le rapport entre l'enseignement et la communauté et les efforts pour introduire un système d'enseignement obligatoire et libre. Enfin, on étudie comment Ryerson a essayé d'apporter des améliorations à la pédagogie et aux conditions dans lesquelles elle s'exerçait.

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INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the establishment of a successful system of education in Upper Canada was due to the work and genius of Egerton Ryerson. Many works acknowledge this and trace his achievements. Whether Ryerson was an originator or merely a developer of other people's ideas is a question debated in the 1970's[1], but for the purpose of this study it is important only that Ryerson was responsible for the organisation and development of the education system of Upper Canada so that it was able to continue without major upheaval to the present day.

The confused state of public education in Upper Canada at the time when Ryerson became Chief Superintendent of Education in the Province, was such that its successful and efficient organisation required a strong, capable person at the head. Ryerson was clear in his own idea of the kind of education system he intended to found and the ways he intended it to be organised and financed, but his plans were not always in conformity with the opinions of other people. Yet, Ryerson's will was done.

It is the intention of this paper to compare Ryerson's aims and work with contemporary criticism to which they were

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1. See, for example, Albert F. Fiorino, The Philosophical Roots of Egerton Ryerson's idea of education as elaborated in his writings preceding and including the Report of 1846, (Ph.D. dissertation, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, 1975).

subjected and to attempt an assessment of whether Ryerson was in any way influenced by such criticism. It is the writer's hypothesis that Ryerson continued purposefully on his chosen way, ignoring or turning away all criticism.

Most of Ryerson's work was directed at the establishment of a system of public elementary education in common schools and this is the area in which the study will be concentrated. Since it is the initial moves which set the tone of policy and which also draw more general fire, the study will be confined to the first decade of Ryerson's long period in office, covering, therefore, the period from 1844 to approximately the middle of the 1850's, by which time the impact of the major Education Act of 1850, the "Charter of the School System of Upper Canada"[2], had been felt, and George Brown, editor of the Toronto Globe and Ryerson's most vehement critic, had begun to comment favourably on certain aspects of Ryerson's policy.

It should be noted that the term criticism refers to both favourable and unfavourable comment and will be used in both senses, although most of the criticism of Ryerson's work made publicly was of the adverse kind.

The area of education covered principally by the school system of which Ryerson was the head, was that of public edu-

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2. J. George Hodgins, Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada, Vol. VIII, (Toronto, L.K. Cameron, 1894-1910), p. 223.

cation, that is schools open without restriction to all children. It was to these schools that Ryerson sought to apply the principle that a universal and common education should be provided for all at the public expense.

Common schools or public schools came eventually to be supported by general taxation and were open on a common basis for all. Schools for advanced studies existed but these were mainly private fee-paying institutions, while those in the public sector were usually primary schools whose task was to provide basic literacy and numeracy so that capable pupils could seek entry later to the more specialised secondary stage.

The area known as Upper Canada, or Canada West, over which Egerton Ryerson reigned as Chief Superintendent of Schools, covers what is now the province of Ontario.

Ryerson worked in a period when great social and economic change was taking place. By 1850, the greater part of the productive land in the Province of Canada West had been granted to settlers, and urban populations were beginning to grow. Over 60% of the population of York County was to be found in urban areas, including Toronto. Railways were being built, and together with the newly-invented telegraph, they helped in the rapid spread of information and ideas. Many new newspapers appeared and the frequency of their publication increased until some went to press daily. Their delivery was made easier through the offices of a cheap postal system. People were

becoming more aware of what was happening around them and, as J. Donald Wilson puts it, they were made to ask, "What next?".[3]

The Globe had the largest circulation in British North America and although the views it spread throughout the Province were largely antagonistic to Ryerson, it made people aware of the issues involved and, supportive or not, it helped Ryerson in the propogation of his ideas.

The growth of the systems both of education and of government in Upper Canada began in what Wilson describes as "a virtual wilderness".[4] The first English school was established in 1786 in Kingston, two years after the arrival of the first Loyalists. The Provincial Government took official form in 1791 but the first act creating a common school system did not come until 1816, after the War of 1812 was safely past.

The radicalism, which in Britain had led to the Great Reform Bill, had its equivalent in Upper Canada but there was also a strong Tory camp. In education as well as politics, this conflict was apparent and an attempt to reorganise the education system in 1836 foundered in the troubles of the 1837 Rebellion

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3. J. Donald Wilson, "The Ryerson Years in Canada West", J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp and Louis-Philippe Audet, Canadian Education: A History, (Scarborough, Ont., Prentice-Hall of Canada, Ltd., 1970), p. 214-239.

4. J. Donald Wilson, "Education in Upper Canada: Sixty Years of Change", ibid., p. 190-212.

which arose from the conflict between the ideals of Tories and Reformers.

In government, the conflict was between the conservative Tory, "High Church" group, consisting principally of the Lieutenant-Governor, the Executive Council and the Legislative Council, on the one hand, all appointed to their office; and, on the other hand, supporters of a Reform philosophy, of "Low Church" persuasion, members of the elected Legislative Assembly. The Tory group was referred to as the "Family Compact", indicating the popular view of their authoritative unity.

In education, conflict related to the two parties was also to be found. The "Family Compact" favoured an élitist system of fee-paying grammar schools, preparing future members of professions from whom would come a ruling class which would perpetuate the Establishment. Reformers demanded universal and free education in a system of Common Schools.

The Church of England had acted throughout as though it was the established church and had succeeded in controlling education up to the beginning of the nineteenth century. There was little question that the church should control education but Reformers, in particular, began to ask why the controller should be the Church of England. Methodists, with much rural support, challenged the established pattern and their circuit

riders did much to spread this gospel in addition to the other Gospel they preached throughout the Province. Egerton Ryerson was among them. The Methodists were further distrusted by Anglicans, Presbyterians and Catholics because they were suspected of being of republican sympathies, many of them being American-born or trained in America.

The publication of Lord Durham's Report led to more responsible government and also drew attention to the need for educational reform in the Canadas, particularly in Upper Canada, where schools were described as being "of a very inferior character".[5]

It is at this point that Ryerson came on to the scene, gradually to take over, remodel and preside over the education system of Upper Canada for over thirty years.

Egerton Ryerson was born on 24th March 1803 on a farm near the village of Vittoria to the north of Lake Erie. He felt it advisable to leave his home in his late teens because his leanings to Methodism conflicted with his father's Tory Anglican beliefs. He spent two years as an usher, or assistant teacher, in a district grammar school, and later entered the Methodist ministry as a "circuit rider". In 1829, he became the first editor of the Methodist newspaper, the Christian Guardian, being almost continuously in this post until 1840.

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5. G.M. Craig (ed.), Lord Durham's Report, (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1963), p. 101.

Ryerson's campaign for equal rights for all denominations, allowing no special privileges for the Church of England, brought him into public notice, his first sally being a forceful attack on a sermon by John Strachan, later to be Bishop of Toronto, given at the funeral in 1825 of Bishop Jacob Mountain of Quebec.

A visit to England in 1833 showed Ryerson that Radicals such as Hume and Roebuck, idols of the Reformers of Upper Canada, were too radical for his taste, and furthermore, they were atheists. Gradually, Ryerson's views became more moderate and tended eventually towards the conservative.

He worked to establish the Methodist Victoria College of which he became the inaugurating principal in 1841, remaining in that post until 1844. The college, situated in Coburg, was the first non-Anglican body of this kind to receive a Royal Charter.

Ryerson came again to public notice in 1844 when he stoutly defended the Governor-General, Sir Charles Metcalfe, against charges that Metcalfe had unconstitutionally made certain appointments without consulting the Legislative Council. This support of the leader of the Establishment led to his being appointed, that same year, Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Canada West, and two years later he took on the full mantle of Superintendent. As will be shown, his enemies made

much of the suggestions of political overtones in his appointment.

Some of the criticism considered in this study came from people totally opposed to all that Ryerson sought. There was a strong personal element in that parts of this criticism seemed due simply to the fact that it was Egerton Ryerson who had initiated whatever plan or action was under fire. A great deal of the criticism from the Globe, under the editorship of George Brown, was of this order.

Some criticism was made because Ryerson was changing a pattern which, however unsatisfactory, was known and accepted by people. Such criticism emanated frequently from local boards and officials. There was criticism of Ryerson's power and the fact that his alone were the hands that directed education.

Strong objection came on matters where money was concerned, sometimes because critics did not approve of the apportionment of money, but more often because people could not see that money obtained from them would return to them personally in the form of intangible benefits. This opposition was found in the controversy over the abolition of rate-bills and the measure making a tax on property a major source of revenue for education.

Many of Ryerson's proposals had the support of teachers and public but the disorganised and primitive conditions made

their implementation very difficult. Here, usually, criticism was directed more against the system than against Ryerson, but it is equally worthy of consideration as part of this study.

The study will consider four main areas to each of which a chapter will be allocated. They are: Ryerson's work to provide a Christian education fitting children for life, citizenship and employment; Ryerson's attempt to involve the community in his work for education; Ryerson's advocacy of compulsory, free education; and Ryerson's work in the field of pedagogy, involving teachers, methods, textbooks and school buildings. Each chapter will begin with a general statement of Ryerson's aim in the area concerned and each area will be examined under a number of subheadings. Each of these sections will open with a consideration of Ryerson's aim and policy within that specific area. The opposition or adverse criticisms of this policy will next be considered, after which will be presented Ryerson's reply to or refutation of the criticism in words or deeds. Finally, in each section, any supporting criticism will be considered. Each chapter will end with a short summary and a statement of the situation at the close of the decade under consideration, with a view to assessing the extent to which Ryerson was or was not influenced by criticism.

Finally, an attempt will be made to draw a conclusion concerning the effect of criticism on Ryerson's work at the beginning of his period in office.

Works consulted in this study have been listed in the bibliography, but mention should be made here of certain primary and secondary sources which have been of particular value.

Any study of the beginnings of public education in Upper Canada, and particularly of the years when Ryerson was Chief Superintendent of Education for the province, must acknowledge great indebtedness to the conscientiousness of J. George Hodgins whose collections of documents, reports, comments and reminiscences, including those of Ryerson himself, provide an invaluable primary source of information. In this study, another essential primary source, giving information mainly concerning criticism of Ryerson's policies, was in the editions of the Globe newspaper of Toronto, photographed on microfilm and kept in the McLennan Library of McGill University. Some of the copies photographed were apparently in the early stages of decay, with the result that, occasionally, it has proved impossible to give full reference to the situation of material used, the page numbers having become indecipherable.

Microfilm photographs of editions of the British Colonist newspaper of Toronto, found in the library of Concordia University, Montreal, were also of value in showing both support and criticism of Ryerson and his work. Ryerson's own publication, the Journal of Education, was a primary source of writings

by and approved by Ryerson. It was an indication also of the methods used by him to communicate his aims and views to teachers, administrators and other members of the public. The editions used were those from the complete collection held on microfilm in the library of the Faculty of Education of McGill University.

Studies of Ryerson made a few decades after his period in office and others made a century or more after that time have thrown light on aspects of his aims and work. Notably among the former have been the works by Burwash, Coleman and Putman; and among the latter group have been those by Carlton, Jobling, Sissons and Thomas. Rarely in any of these studies made near to or far from Ryerson's time was there to be found criticism of an adverse kind of Ryerson's aims or work. Indeed, it was not until the writer had the good fortune to attend a conference on " Egerton Ryerson and his Times" at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education early in 1976, that he found a tendency to question the adulation which has generally been apparent in studies of Ryerson's work. While not seeking to suggest that Ryerson had feet of clay, such an approach has helped put into better perspective the relationship of Ryerson and his critics.

CHAPTER I

A CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR LIFE, CITIZENSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT

Egerton Ryerson saw the aim of an education system to be the preparation of children not only to become good citizens and a useful work force for the country, but also to live full lives, using to the best of their ability the faculties with which they had been endowed. He believed that it was essential for such a system to be based on the principles of Christianity but, in spite of his being a Methodist minister, and perhaps because of his earlier involvement in the opposition to the power in Upper Canada of factions connected closely with the Church of England, he was determined that the education offered should be as free from sectarian bias as possible.

In seeking to assess how far Ryerson reacted to criticism, this chapter will consider the aim stated above and criticism of it, treating by stages education for life and citizenship, the replacement of "instruction" by "education", education for employment, and Ryerson's advocacy of a non-sectarian Christian education.

This aim, and those to be considered in succeeding

chapters, necessitated a number of changes in the existing state of affairs and it would be convenient to open by looking at some of these changes.

1. Changes initiated by Ryerson.

Although efforts had been made in the early nineteenth century to set up a system of common school education in Upper Canada, nothing of the kind contemplated by Ryerson had been established. There was no province-wide organisation and little general awareness of what was needed or what was possible. Unsuccessful attempts had been made, particularly under John Strachan, to establish an organised system, but Ryerson came along at a time when easier communications by rail and post, and the beginnings of a movement of population towards Toronto in the centre, made more likely successful centralisation and organisation.[1]

There were many innovations and many changes that would be necessary and perhaps the most difficult problem to be tackled at first was the indifference on the part of the public.[2] Although not strictly opposition or adverse criticism, such indifference had a similar effect in impeding initial moves.

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1. J. Donald Wilson, "Education in Upper Canada in the pre-Ryerson Period", a paper read at a conference "Egerton Ryerson and his Times", Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 19-21 February 1976.

2. Editorial, The Globe, Toronto, 3 February 1847, p. 38.

Both Ryerson and the Globe of Toronto felt that the indifference stemmed from ignorance on the part of the public as to the actual state of education in Upper Canada and Ryerson set about collecting and publishing all the information he could muster. The Globe urged that mere publishing was not enough; someone should talk to the people.[3] As an itinerant preacher, Ryerson had acquired much practice in this and later in 1847, the year of the Globe's advice, he set off on a tour of the Province to speak to meetings of citizens about education in Upper Canada.

Many saw no reason to change such education system as there was, for to people and governments greatly concerned with the establishment of homes, farms, industrial enterprises and cities, education could be considered little more than a luxury. In addition, many people were quite content with the existing system, however varied and disorganized.[4] Opposition to Ryerson's efforts for change came, therefore, in various forms.

At first, it was apathy, for whatever cause, which impeded progress. A casual attitude to the election of trustees put unsuitable people into that position with the result that

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3. Ibid.

4. Wilson, op. cit.

some boards did not even bother to apply for government grants to which they were entitled, and little progress was made in education.[5] Ryerson's Report for 1853 included a table of "Deficiencies" which showed in his opinion that areas with large illiteracy figures were those where large numbers of children were not attending school, where few rates were imposed and where few School lectures were delivered; in short, the areas with greatest apathy.[6]

It is not easy to judge the accuracy of Ryerson's interpretation of the figures in the table, since a mixture of percentages and whole numbers without adequate reference points makes fair judgement impossible. It would seem that part of his opinion is borne out by the situation shown to exist in Simcoe, Essex and Prescott. Each had over 50% of the population illiterate, the highest proportions given in the table, and ranked among the highest in percentage of children not attending school. Prescott, in this respect, was the leader, if such be a satisfactory term, with 43%.

Ryerson realised that the situation could be self-perpetuating unless he had the support of the well educated people. He complained in 1850, "Our Schools are often now poor and feeble, because a large portion of the best educated inhabitants stand aloof from them, as unworthy of their support and unfit to educate their children." The schools inevitably

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5. J. George Hodgins, Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada, Vol. VII, (Toronto, L.K. Cameron, 1894-1910), p. 175; Vol. VIII, p. 83-93 and p. 216.

6. Ibid., XI, p. 94-95.

had an air of being only for children of lower-intellectual groups.[7] Even the teachers were unwilling that the term "common" should be applied too fully in respect to the common schools. Many considered that the street urchins from the cities were not suitable candidates for schools where neatness and order were expected.[8]

There were active forms of opposition. Some official bodies sent formal Memorials and Petitions to the Legislature urging the retention of the status quo and each step towards more centralised control met with opposition which preferred the local control established in earlier acts.[9] The most powerful and very nearly most successful attempt to return to aspects of old systems was the "Cameron Act" of 1849[10] which, among other measures, would have abolished the post of Chief Superintendent.

Since the affair of the "Cameron Act" was of some importance during the first decade of Ryerson's term of office, a short review of the events concerning its passage and repeal should be interpolated at this point.

For reasons which will be discussed later, there was a body of opinion which feared, or professed to fear, that

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7. Ibid., IX, p. 77.

8. Susan Houston, "Social Reform and Education in Upper Canada", paper read at O.I.S.E. conference, Toronto, February 1976.

9. Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. iii.

10. 12th Victoria, Chapter LXXXIII.

Ryerson's aims were to enslave the youth of Canada by means of an authoritarian system of education in what was believed to be the Prussian style, and to extinguish thereby the liberty beloved of the populace of Upper Canada. According to Ryerson's own account,[11] the Honourable Malcolm Cameron "was astounded at these 'awful disclosures', and was dazzled by the theories proposed to rid the country of the enslaving elements of my Prussian school system", and prepared to present a Bill to the Legislature to remove Ryerson's influence and return to earlier ways.

Profiting from the confusion and disorder resulting from the riots in Montreal during which part of the Parliament House and its library were burned, Cameron introduced a Bill prepared by a friend in the Bathurst District Council who had for some time been campaigning against Ryerson. Hodgins explains that it was assumed by members of the Government that Cameron was acting on Ryerson's behalf and that the Bill was "identical with, and a combination of the two Drafts of School Bills, sent by the Chief Superintendent of Education to the Provincial Secretary" on 14th October 1848 and 23rd February 1849.[12]

Ryerson wondered what had happened to his Drafts but, in spite of his being promised a copy, it was not until April

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11. Egerton Ryerson, The Story of My Life, (Toronto, E. Briggs, 1883), p. 424 - 6.

12. Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 224.

1849 that he learned from a member of the Provincial Board of Education, Joseph C. Morrison, that there were aspects of the proposed Bill which would lead to drastic changes in the education system as Ryerson had so far organised it, and to which Morrison was strongly opposed.[13] Even so, that gentleman had seen only an outline of the Bill.

Eventually, Ryerson obtained a copy and, as he said in his account of the situation, "On examining the Bill I wrote down my objections to it and laid them before the Government." He went to Montreal to press his objections in person, but the Bill went through the House "in the ordinary manner of passing Bills, during the last few hours of the Session", and taking only one hour, most members' minds being otherwise occupied and most of the copies of the Bill having been destroyed in the fire. Within three hours, Ryerson had offered his resignation to the Honourable Mr. Baldwin, Attorney General, "for I never would administer that law".

Ryerson continued to make known in great detail his objections to the new Act. Briefly, they were that full enquiries into the existing system should first have been made; the Act had been drawn up in a spirit of hostility to Ryerson personally; it did away with the clergy as School Visitors; it reduced Provincial control of schools; it was prejudicial to the objects of the Normal School; it proposed

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13. Letter, 11 April 1849, ibid., loc. cit.

methods of producing School Reports which would be "tedious, expensive and inefficient", and its financial provisions would render the teachers "liable to a loss of twenty-five to forty per cent of the School Fund."[14]

As a temporary solution, Ryerson suggested that the Act be suspended, all schools having the necessary forms and instructions to continue under the provisions of the Acts of 1846 and 1847. "In the meantime," he said, "after mature deliberation, I have thought it, upon the whole, advisable to prosecute my contemplated work, (as far as I may be enabled,) for the next few months, as if no change in the School System had been intended."[15]

Ryerson, however, was not a man to leave his flanks unprotected, for, in a private letter to Baldwin, sent on the same date as the formal notice of his decision to continue in office, he said that if the Act was to continue in force, he must resign "or virtually abandon principles and provisions which I have advocated as of great and vital importance, and become a party to my own personal humiliation and degradation."[16]

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14. Egerton Ryerson, "Objections to the New School Bill of the Honourable Malcolm Cameron", ibid., VIII, p. 225 - 230.

15. Prefatory note to letter to Baldwin, stating objections to the Act, 14 July 1849, ibid., VIII, p. 231 - 2.

16. Letter, 14 July 1849, ibid., VIII, p. 232 - 243.

Royal Assent had been given to the Act on 30th May 1849 but it was not to come into operation until 1st January 1850. There was time for reconsideration in the light of Ryerson's objections. J. Leslie, the Provincial Secretary, wrote to Ryerson that the Governor General, Lord Elgin, "feels that your practical knowledge of the working of the School System entitles your opinion to much weight", and that he had directed that Ryerson's statement should be considered in Council "with a view to Legislation". In the meantime, Ryerson was to "maintain the present system . . . so far as you may be able to do so in accordance with the Law".[17]

The affair ended when the "Cameron Act" was repealed and superseded by An Act for the Better Establishment and Maintenance of Common Schools in Upper Canada[18] passed on 24th July 1850.

Hodgins pointed out the advantage of the Cameron affair in that it "led to a more thorough examination by our public men of the foundation upon which the School System of Upper Canada had been placed. . . . It also led to the enactment of the comprehensive and popular School Law of 1850, which has always been regarded as the Charter of the

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17. Letter, 15 December 1849, ibid., VIII, p. 247.

18. 13th and 14th Victoria, Chapter XLVIII.

School System of Upper Canada".[19]

In the long term, Ryerson held nothing against Cameron for the abortive Act and later looked on him as a firm supporter. Looking back, Ryerson wrote, "I believe no man in Canada more sincerely rejoiced than did Mr. Cameron at the repeal of his School Act of 1849, and no man has more cordially supported the present System, or more frankly and earnestly commended the course I have pursued".[20]

Cameron also looked back in a letter he wrote to Ryerson in 1857 and, referring to the year 1849, he said, "I do not want to remember. God grant that we may see, in all matters for the rest of our few days, eye to eye, as we do now on all subjects in which you are now engaged, publicly and privately." He had opposed Ryerson between 1844 and 1849 for what he esteemed "a sacrifice of Canadian freedom, and right to self-government".[21]

The Cameron affair illustrates the grave fears that were stirred up by opponents of Ryerson, but it also illustrates the way in which Ryerson frequently and successfully handled critics and opponents. Threats of resignation not carried out are a simple ploy to bring a degree of pressure

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19. Hodgins, op.cit., VIII, p. 223.

20. Ryerson, The Story of My Life, p.426.

21. Letter, Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p.249.

to bear and Ryerson's statements of his intentions and the improvements he had effected to date had placed him in a strong enough position in relation to the Governor General for such threats to carry weight. This method, however, was not typical of Ryerson. More typical was the process of deluging the opposition and potential supporters with long minutely-argued letters and statements so that the effect must have been akin to the reception of a broadside from a battleship of the period.

The Cameron affair was fought in and around the Legislature but there were skirmishes in other areas. The administrative division of the province into small school sections added strength to some of Ryerson's opponents for, as Thomas Donnelly, Prince Edward District Superintendent, pointed out, it was possible for one or two individuals to control or impede the work of boards of trustees according to their own inclinations.[22] Always Ryerson had to hope for favourable attitudes on the part of members of the Legislature in order that his measures might pass into Law, but, as will be shown, he was usually able so to prepare his ground that his plans gained legal status without too much difficulty.

In general, though, Ryerson's main problem at the outset was the neglect of education on the part of previous admini-

22. Report of Prince Edward District Superintendent, May 1848, Egerton Ryerson, (ed.), Journal of Education, Toronto, 1848 - 1877, (June 1848), p. 172-4.

strations,[23] which had left what he described as a proliferation of schools "of an inferior description".[24]

In spite of the fears of some of his critics, Ryerson did not want to change things in one stroke. His conservative Tory background and its social connections limited his desire to overturn suddenly the existing order. Yet he was determined that change there should be. Such work would be a long task. In the concluding paragraph to his Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada of 1846, he wrote, "The completion of the structure of which I have endeavoured to lay the foundation and furnish the plan, must be the work of years -- perhaps of an age."[25]

Nevertheless, he was aware of the potential of his office. In 1842, he wrote to T.W.C. Murdoch, the Private Secretary to Sir Charles Bagot, that the Superintendency "would afford the incumbent a most favourable opportunity, by his communications, preparation and recommendation of books for libraries, etc., to abolish differences and jealousies on minor points; to promote agreement on great principles and interests, . . . and . . . to teach the people at large to appreciate . . . the institutions established amongst them."[26]

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23. Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 175.

24. Letter to Provincial Secretary, ibid., VII, P. 188-195.

25. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, ibid., VI, p. 211.

26. Letter, 14 January 1842, Ryerson, The Story of My Life, p. 342 - 3.

He intended, therefore, to pull together the existing fragmented system of education into a thoroughly comprehensive one which would cater for the needs of youth from basic literacy to the university level. He wished to invade every area of the system, buildings, books, teachers, administration, and bring all into one uniform, simple but efficient organisation, providing not only knowledge but full development of the faculties. People might, therefore, be placed most advantageously in a Christian society.[27]

The road may have been long but Ryerson was determined to move firmly along it. He considered that strength was in persistence. In one of his lectures to Mechanics' Institutes, Ryerson told his audience, "It is an indication of mental weakness, and a means of increasing it, to abandon one's pursuit, or relation, or position, as soon as he encounters a difficulty, or meets with an offence, or is disappointed in an indulgence. . . . Fickleness in a country, as well as in an individual, is the parent of littleness, and is the enemy of advancement of any kind."[28] He had no sympathy for inefficiency.[29]

He believed in thoroughness: with regard to pedagogy, he wrote "Better to teach a few things well than to skim

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27. Letter to the Private Secretary to Sir Charles Metcalfe, 8 March 1844, Hodgins, op. cit., V, p. 108.

28. Egerton Ryerson, Lecture, "The Social Advancement of Canada", Mechanics' Institutes, October 1849, Journal of Education, (December 1849), p. 178 - 184.

29. See Ryerson's statement on the licensing of teachers in 1871 for an example of this. Hodgins, op. cit., XIII, p. 131.

superficially over all the sciences",[30] and anyone reading but a small part of the material he painstakingly produced during his term of office, cannot but be aware of Ryerson's own conscientiousness.

All the same, Ryerson did not claim to be infallible: any faults in the law must be analysed and put right. He believed that the Common School Law should work but, as he told District Municipal Councils, "if, in any case, the special objects of the Common School Law are not accomplished, it is desirable and important to ascertain, by a most careful enquiry, and upon the best evidence, whether the failure arises from the defects of the Law itself, or from other causes, -- or from both."[31]

A further instance of Ryerson's thoroughness is seen in his insisting upon making a tour of America and Europe before taking office, in order to meet with practising teachers and administrators, and to learn at first hand what was happening in the already developed education systems of those countries. "This cannot be done by mere reading," he wrote to J.M. Higginson, the Private Secretary to Sir Charles Metcalfe, "It can only be well done by means of personal examination. . . . A practical acquaintance with the results

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30. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, ibid., VI, p. 179.

31. Circular to District Municipal Councils, 3 February 1845, ibid., V, p. 263 - 4.

of European intelligence and experience, in regard to books, libraries, training of Teachers, management of Schools, etcetera, would place me upon strong ground."[32]

To effect so broadly-based a reorganisation required changes in the existing patterns and although there was some opposition and much indifference at first, there was also enthusiasm. When Ryerson made his tour of the Province in 1847, in order to explain and publicise his schemes as they had been presented in the Act of 1846,[33] he met and put to rout those who opposed him in public lectures, to the delight of the people who filled the lecture halls to hear him.[34]

To a degree, Ryerson found some interest and support surprising. There is something pathetic in his comment, made as late as August, 1849, to the Attorney-General, Robert Baldwin, "You are the first Member of any Government, who has taken the trouble to ascertain, by personal enquiry, the nature and working of the Education Office, as a part of the Common School System of Upper Canada."[35]

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32. Letter to the Private Secretary to Sir Charles Metcalfe, 26 July 1844, ibid., V, p. 110.

33. Act for the Better Establishment and Maintenance of Common Schools in Upper Canada, 9th Victoria, Chapter XX.

34. Letters to J. George Hodgins during lecture tour, 1847, Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 136 - 9.

35. Letter to Robert Baldwin, 16 August 1849, ibid., VIII, p. 244.

Unlike the situation today, when an organised school system is taken for granted and people feel uneasy when children are not attending school, the idea of any province-wide school organisation of the kind Ryerson envisaged was startling and, for many, quite unreasonable. People had far more important tasks for their children to do than to let them sit regularly in a school room. It is not surprising that Ryerson met, initially, with opposition and indifference to the changes he proposed.

2. Education for Life and Citizenship

A change that was happening -- and due not to Ryerson but to the people themselves -- was that settlers eventually became more established. Those in large communities came to be faced with mercantile and industrial civilisation, and those in the rural areas would find occasional moments of repose, when the initial battle for survival became less intense. With these factors in mind, Ryerson intended, through his education system, to enable the next generation to lead useful lives as citizens and as fully developed people.

Satisfactory development of the faculties of children requires that they be given at least a degree of individual attention by the teacher, and Ryerson's plans were immediately faced with opposition due to the state of affairs

in the average school room. The root causes of these conditions were the generally poor quality of teachers, the conditions under which they worked and the lack of organised material available to them in the form of standardised textbooks or even the basic aids of blackboards and maps. These will be considered in more detail in a later chapter.

The Reverend W.H. Landon, one of the more perceptive inspectors of the time, reported in 1849 of one apparently typical school from over a hundred that he had visited in the Brock District, "The place is filled with noise and disorder, rendering study impossible."[36]

In addition to such obstacles already placed in the way, Ryerson brought upon himself charges that he was trying to impose upon Upper Canada political conditions and an elaborately bureaucratic education system of the kind found in the Kingdom of Prussia. It was a feature of Ryerson's style to support his plans by multitudinous references to other areas where similar schemes had been successful. Throughout his great statement of his views on education, his Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada of 1846, he made reference to the virtues of education systems in various countries of

36. J. George Hodgins, Schools and Colleges in Ontario 1792-1910, Vols I-III, (Toronto, King's Printer, 1910), Vol. II, p. 84.

Europe and quoted his own and other people's views of those systems. Prussia figured largely in the work. Writing of the teacher's work, Ryerson said, "In Prussia and in Saxony as well as in Scotland, the power of commanding and retaining the attention of a class is held to be a sine qua non in a Teacher's qualifications."[37] The combination of Prussia and the suggestion of command was a factor in leading people to suspect Ryerson of authoritarian tendencies.

Relations between teachers were shown to be very good in Germany. "The intercourse of Teachers and Educators, in all parts of Germany, is constant and intimate -- to an extent that can be scarcely conceived by a stranger. Thus, the improvements and views of each become the property of all -- the educational instructors of the people constitute an extensive and most influential fraternity."[38] Again, in such a comment, there is apparent to those who seek it, a threat to individualism.

Ryerson was impressed by the way the Prussian education system was supervised by the law and obviously approved the universality of the Prussian system. In this respect, Ryerson wrote in strong terms about duty, never

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37. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., VI, p. 202.

38. Ibid., VI, p. 209.

a popular topic. The parent, he said, "owes duties to his child, -- he owes duties to society. In neglecting to educate, he wrongs his child -- dooms him to ignorance, if not to vice, -- . . . he also wrongs society, by robbing it of an intelligent and useful member. . . . To protect childhood and manhood and society from such wrongs, is the object of the Prussian School Law" which imposed compulsory school attendance and paid for the children of the indigent.[39]

As will be shown, Ryerson met with opposition over the question of compulsory and free education and this, together with his evident approval of methods used in a country associated in many people's minds with a degree of autocracy, led to attacks on his "Prussian Despotism". Hodgins quotes letters by Ryerson to the editors of the British Colonist and The Banner of Toronto which indicate that he had been under attack from those papers for his "Prussian Despotism". It appears also that the authorship of a series of articles in praise of "the German Theory of Education" had been, wrongly according to Ryerson, attributed to him.[40]

The Globe was early in the fight. An editorial written in December 1846 claimed that German education was a "development of the crafty school of Metternich and of Prussia,

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39. Ibid., VI, p. 207 - 8.

40. The British Colonist, Toronto, 1 January 1847 et seq., ibid., VII, p. 214.

to prevent the German people from recovering their political rights." Such repression could not be accepted in Upper Canada. Ryerson's suggestion that the masses should be moulded by education was seized upon and seen as an attempt on behalf of the government to make the people conform to its wishes. "It is a base plot against the rights of the people. . . . The whole people of Upper Canada should address the Government, requesting them to hurl from his place the arch conspirator who has dared to propose such a system of education among a free people."[41]

It is true that Ryerson admired the German school of education but it seems clear from a viewpoint well removed from his time that his admiration was largely for the way it based its studies on Man and his relationship to the external world. It would seem that Prussian methods greatly influenced Ryerson's own views on teaching method, as they had Cousin, Mann, and many others, but his views on education for life and citizenship extended beyond method alone.

A satisfactory school system should provide a full range of educational facilities in order to sustain and develop the economy and cultural tradition of the area it serves.[42] This and the ability to make moral assessments

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41. Editorial, Globe, 19 December 1846, page number indecipherable.

42. Robin S. Harris, Quiet Evolution. A Study of the Educational System of Ontario, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 125.

regarding situations in which an individual found himself were what Ryerson sought to provide. Education "is our apprenticeship for the business of life."[43] It will "qualify and dispose the subjects of it for their appropriate duties and employments of life, as Christians, as persons of business, and also as members of the civil community in which they live."[44] The degree of civilisation of a country depended upon the character and extent of its education.[45] Ryerson wanted each person to be "a man of knowledge, talent and virtue -- endowments which if equally possessed by the farmer, or mechanic, will make him equally a guardian, an honour and benefactor of his Country."[46]

Education was a safeguard for the country and its people. He had written in 1831, "An educated people are [sic] always a loyal people to good government. . . . An ignorant population are equally fit and liable to be slaves of despots, and the dupes of demagogues."[47]

Ryerson's view was broad and long. Education was not

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43. Egerton Ryerson, Lecture, "The Importance of Education to an Agricultural People", Journal of Education, (September 1848), p. 257 - 268.

44. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, Hodgins, op. cit., VI, p. 142.

45. Journal of Education, (July 1848), p. 194.

46. Ryerson, op. cit., Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 143.

47. Egerton Ryerson, Editorial, Christian Guardian, Toronto, 1829-1925, 23 April 1831, p. 94.

only for the present but for the future. "Let each educated man in the land put the question to himself -- 'What characteristics shall I impress upon those who come after me?'"[48] Use should also be made of past knowledge. "He that knows History adds the experience of former ages to his own."[49]

More particularly, Ryerson wanted to enable each man to fit into society. "Society assumes and demands the merging of the individual man in the social man." Through education, society was therefore to be strengthened. "And the power of each individual or of each class of individuals in a community, is in proportion to their intellectual and moral development."[50] It is true that Ryerson was thinking of the good of the state, of the province, but surely not in the "Prussian" way suggested by George Brown.

Ryerson's man in society must be aware not only of his rights but his duties. The schools should "instruct him in the rights, as well as the duties of man";[51] indeed, Ryerson considered a study of Civil Government to be "a branch of moral science".[52]

One of man's duties was to exercise satisfactorily

48. Journal of Education, (July 1848), loc. cit.

49. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, Hodgins, op. cit., VI, p. 189.

50. Ryerson, "The Social Advancement of Canada", Journal of Education, (December 1849), p. 178 - 184.

51. Letter to the Bishop of Toronto, 1852, Hodgins, op. cit., X, p. 188.

52. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, ibid., VI, p. 193.

the elective franchise. All levels of government require men of education and the election of such men requires an understanding of the matters concerned. "I observe," said Ryerson during his lecture tour of 1847, ". . . that education, and even some general knowledge, is necessary to enable the people to discharge and exercise judiciously the first duty and most valued privilege of a free-man -- the Elective franchise. . . . This is one of the most essential conditions of a free government; but it involves corresponding duties and supposes corresponding qualifications on the part of electors.[53]

Earlier, in his Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, he had written, "The object of education is to prepare men for their duties, and the preparation and disciplining of the mind for the performance of them."[54] This attitude is quite the reverse of the "Prussian" one attributed to Ryerson, whereby he should surely have been seeking to create unthinking sheep who would meekly follow where the Government led. On the contrary, Ryerson wrote to the Bishop of Toronto, he wanted schools to "develop all the intellectual powers of man,

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53. Egerton Ryerson, Lecture, "The Importance of Education to a Manufacturing, and a Free People", Journal of Education, (October 1848), p. 289 - 301.

54. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, loc. cit.

teach him self-reliance".[55]

The purpose of education was not only to provide good citizens. One object was simply to develop as fully as possible each mind. This was the kind of moulding sought by Ryerson. It was to create better and therefore greater people. Ryerson intended that everyone, regardless of social status, should have the opportunity to avail himself of such development. It was the fact that this was offered to all that caused his critics to claim that he sought to mould the masses. Ryerson's hope, however, was that all would come to have sufficient awareness of life to prevent anyone coming along, as the Globe had suggested Ryerson had done, to plot to take from the people their political rights.[56]

It was not enough that a man should be skilled in his craft. During his second official tour of the province in 1853, Ryerson spoke to meetings of teachers and other interested people in each district at what were known as the Second School Convention, the First Convention being during his first official tour of 1847. In his address to the Second School Convention, Ryerson said that a man should have an understanding of the principles behind and beyond his immediate task. In a beautifully phrased state-

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55. Egerton Ryerson, "Survey of the State of Education, January 1851, Hodgins, op. cit., X, p. 40.

56. Editorial, Globe, 19 December 1846, page number indecipherable.

ment, Ryerson said that the Mechanic should "realize the identity between the principle of gravitation which endangers his own safety in the event of his losing his balance in an elevated position, and that principle which forms the mechanical powers, which gives solid foundations to the mountains, which determines the flow of the river."[57] The man in the rural areas, too, should use his intellect as well as his farming skills. "Let the farmer's fireside be the place of reading, reflection and conversation, such as appertain to intelligent and improving minds."[58] Indeed, in considering subjects to be taught in schools, Ryerson recommended Geography, Nature and General History because they would give "knowledge of ordinary topics of social intercourse."[59]

Ryerson believed that knowledge was the guarantee of a worthy society. For want of knowledge and "materials and resources of enjoyment" obtained through education, "many a Mechanic shuns intelligent society; and instead of seeking gratification and profit . . . in rational social intercourse, or useful reading he resorts to sensual indul-

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57. Egerton Ryerson, Address to the Second School Convention 1853, "Nature and Importance of Education to Mechanics", Hodgins, op. cit., XI, p. 46.

58. Ryerson, "The Importance of Education to an Agricultural People", ibid., VII, p. 144.

59. Ryerson, Address to the Second School Convention, ibid., VII, p. 41.

gences and abandons himself to the lower propensities of the animal nature".[60] "To leave children uneducated is to train up thieves and incendiaries and murderers," he said.[61] In the country, it is easy to allow the mind to remain undeveloped. "Such ignorance may be bliss," he commented, "but it is the bliss of brutes, not of intellectual beings."[62]

It should be noted that, as Ryerson pointed out in the preamble to his Address to the Second School Convention in 1853, from which many of the above quotations are taken, he was presenting a considerable innovation in speaking of education for mechanics and tradesmen. Previously, education was felt to be a preparation for the professions only.

One may, perhaps, comment at this point, that we may be seeing proof of Ryerson's views in the late twentieth century, as more and more young people seem to be caught up in crime, fewer seem capable of "rational social intercourse" and there appears to be increasing dissatisfaction with the teaching and provision of "materials and resources of enjoyment" in schools.

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60. Ibid., VII, p. 42.

61. Circular to Wardens of Districts, 14 January 1848, Journal of Education, (January 1848), p. 4 - 16.

62. Statement to Governor General in Council, 27 March 1847, ibid., p. 12.

Among those supporting Ryerson's aims regarding education for life and citizenship was the Reverend W.H. Landon. "The object of education," he wrote, "is to unfold, to enlighten, and to envigorate [sic] the powers of the mind; and to qualify it for exertion, for reflection, and for investigation. To enlighten and refine the moral feelings, and render them susceptible to motives of right action." Unfortunately, he was forced to add, "But, this object is, in no degree, realized in the Schools in question."[63]

Earlier, support had come when the Globe published a report of an address on education given to teachers and freeholders in the town of Quatre Bras, by P. Thornton, the County Superintendent of the Gore District. Having denounced the materialistic practice among parents and teachers of calculating progress by the number of books covered in a given time, he said that education ought not to be merely reading, writing and "casting of accounts" but that "at every stage of progress, the moral and intellectual faculties of the pupils should be kept in exercise."[64]

The attempt to produce a broadened outlook in the pupils was probably one of the factors which improved the quality of the teaching. While more will be said on this in a later chapter, it may be apposite to make reference

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63. Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, II, p. 83.

64. Globe, 29 July 1845, page number indecipherable.

here to two comments made. In 1848, Sir John B. Robinson, Chief Justice, remarked at the Coburg Assizes, that if such teaching as he had seen should be encouraged "there will be an improvement worked out in the general public condition of this Country, and in the social and individual welfare of its inhabitants, which a few years ago, it would have seemed visionary to contemplate."[65] Some years later, Archibald McLachlin, the Local Superintendent of Elgin County noted that, with three exceptions, his teachers regarded "the youngest Pupil as being endowed not merely with memory, to commit and retain names; but with perceptive faculties, to acquire knowledge; judgment, to compare and reason; passions, to be restrained; affections, to be properly directed, and a conscience, to be strengthened and set in authority".[66]

Opinions and attitudes cannot be imposed by force and, as will be shown in the next chapter, Ryerson took steps to bring people gently to his way of thinking. In the matter of the provision of an education for life and citizenship, Ryerson was faced with obstacles in the physical conditions of the school-room, in misunderstandings of his real intentions and in the novelty for Upper Canada of his aims.

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65. Sir John B. Robinson, Coburg Assizes, October 1848, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., VIII, p. 59.

66. Report of the Local Superintendent of Elgin County, 1857, Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, II, p. 136.

3. To replace "instruction by "education".

The fact that a child is not only a memory to be filled was the mainspring of Ryerson's intention to provide "education" rather than"instruction". In this area, he met with no opposition as such but it is clear that most teachers were inclined to be dispensers of facts rather than moulders of fully-developed young people.

An inspector, Thomas Jaffray Robertson, blamed many faults on this one attitude. "Neglect of the material condition of the School, imperfect organization, bad discipline, improper punishments and rewards, defective methods of teaching, etcetera, originate in the very common mistake of making 'instruction' instead of 'education' the end to be attained."[67] It is true Robertson was writing of Grammar Schools, but his remarks were equally applicable to the Common Schools. Landon, as we have seen, believed "education" and even "instruction" were impossible in the conditions prevailing.

Teaching was based on "recitation" wherein single children or groups of children were called to the teacher's desk to recite rules or lists of facts previously memorised. Meanwhile, each of the other groups of children had "an interregnum of several hours in which it may pursue its studies, or amusements, as the fancy takes it" while awaiting

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67. Report of the Inspector General of the Western Region, 1856, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., XII, p. 328 - 330.

its next turn for recitation.[68] It is doubtful whether the teacher's mind could be in any way attuned to the content of the recitation and the likelihood of using it in any broader way could have been only very small.

Landon referred to teachers "being engaged in mending pens, watching the behaviour of the other Pupils, etcetera", and when they did find time to listen to pupils repeating their lessons, "principles and facts have no place in the exercises whatever. Words and signs, alone, are thought worthy of any attention". He gives an example of a school taught by a person who "had enjoyed what we term superior advantages". The class read efficiently a piece about Great Britain, but when the Inspector asked what Great Britain was, he was faced with blank stares. "For anything they had learned from their educated Teacher, it might have been a great Animal, a great Vegetable, or a great Mineral."[69] In the opinion of the County Superintendent of Coburg, Edward Scarlett, children received "senseless training". "Words are learned without meaning. Sentences are stammered over without knowing the ideas they contain. Rules are memorized without understanding them. In short, shadows of things, instead of the things themselves, are

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68. Ibid., IX, p. 172.

69. W.H. Landon, "The State of Schools in the Brock District, 1849", Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, II, p. 82 - 9.

learned."[70] One recognises a similar criticism to those made a century and a half later when, for example, Silberman referred to the "mindlessness" of much schooling.[71] Progress has been made in education though there are times when a teacher of the late twentieth century may, perhaps, be forgiven for wondering how great has been the progress in certain fundamental areas such as the difference between "education" and "instruction".

The result of the situation described by Landon and Scarlett was that progress had to be assessed by the only fact which could be measured -- the number of books covered by the child. The account published in the Globe of an address on education given by P. Thornton, the County Superintendent of the Gore District, showed that he "denounced emphatically the too common practice, both amongst teachers and parents, of calculating a child's progress by the number of books it has got through, in a given time".[72] With a degree of hindsight, a retired teacher, Henry Dugdale, who had taught in Barriefield, near Kingston, looked back to the period of 1850-1851, saying, "The idea of grading pupils, and forming them into classes seems never to have been entertained."[73]

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70. Report of the County Superintendent of Coburg, 1856, ibid., II, p. 106.

71. Charles E. Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom - The Remaking of American Education, (New York, Random House, 1970), p. 10 et passim.

72. Globe, 29 July 1845, page number indecipherable.

73. Reminiscences of Superannuated School Teachers, 1850 - 51", Hodgins, Doc. Hist., IX, p. 299.

It is interesting to note that in 1976, the writer's daughter is attending an experimental elementary school under the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, Quebec, where pupils are not graded into classes but are grouped in "families" of all elementary ages, and for some years it has been the practice in High Schools of the same board to maintain a wide spread of ability in classes. Although some teachers prefer to avoid any form of streaming, there are others who believe that the method referred to by the retired teacher of the nineteenth century is not only more efficient but also more satisfying from the point of view of both teacher and pupil.

Parents, whose own experience of education had been of the kind described in the foregoing paragraphs had no reason to expect the education of their children to be any different from their own. Landon wrote of the view of education held by parents of the Brock District in 1849, "Up to a recent period, (say the last two years,) the people generally seemed to have formed no just conclusion on the subject of Education, or the proper means of imparting it. They seemed to think that all Schools were equal, and that all Teachers, who could read and write in a better manner than their Pupils, were equally good. The matter of educating children in their apprehension, consisted simply in sending them to School, where the Teacher was expected to preside while they read and recited a certain

number of Lessons every day."[74]

Ryerson's views on education were expressed in an address to the Senate and Students of Victoria College in 1848. "By the term 'Education', we mean the training and preparation requisite for the duties of life; and by the phrase 'educated man', we mean, in the widest sense of the expression, every man who knows more than his next neighbour."[75] In more practical terms, he showed later how his curriculum would go beyond the basic necessities of reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic -- the three Rs -- and offer such subjects as might produce his "educated man". His curriculum, suggested in the First Part of his Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada and in his report as chief superintendent, included the basics, Reading and Spelling, Writing, Grammar, Arithmetic, consisting of the first four rules, the compound rules and reduction, and "proportion and above"; but he added Biblical History and Morality, History, Geography, Vocal Music, Linear Drawing, "The Elements of Natural Philosophy", Natural History, Human Physiology, Civil Government, Political Economy, Book-keeping and Agriculture.[76]

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74. Landon, op. cit., Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, II, p. 82 - 89.

75. Egerton Ryerson, Address, "Obligations of Educated Men", Journal of Education, (June 1848), p. 161 - 6.

76. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., VI, p. 142 - 195 & Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1850, ibid., IX, p. 166.

Eventually, his suggestions bore fruit as is shown by an account of the schools in Hamilton, considered by Hodgins to be typical of those in the whole province. It was written by "a Person well-versed in regard to the subject on which he writes". "All the children from the youngest upwards, are taught Geography, Writing, and the elements of Arithmetic. The Scholars going through the Common Schools enter first one of the Primaries; and in these they are taught Reading, Spelling, Enunciation, Pronunciation, Writing on slates, oral and written Arithmetical Tables, Geography, and lessons in Objects, size, colour, form, etcetera." "In the Central School the Course of Instruction comprises Reading, Spelling, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, Grammar, Object Lessons, or Natural History, History (Canadian, English and general), Physiology, Drawing, Mensuration, Book-keeping, Astronomy, Algebra, Geometry."[77]

Teachers and inspectors were making their own attempts in this direction. The County School Superintendent of Peterborough, Thomas Benson, had realised before Ryerson took office that a change of pace is beneficial to children. He wrote in 1844, "I have also had to suggest the benefit of allowing the children a short relaxation during School hours."[78] A teacher in St Thomas Central School, Launcelot Younghusband, was considered sufficiently an innovator for

77. Author unknown, "A Nineteen Years' Record of the Progress of the Grammar and Common Schools in Hamilton," Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, I, p. 72 - 6.

78. Ibid., II, p. 100.

a writer to comment, "He introduced the teaching of singing, which was a break in the monotony of School Exercises, and which was greatly appreciated."[79] He is credited with being "a Teacher of great energy and enthusiasm. . . . He soon filled up the little School Room".

The great change in attitude necessary to turn teachers from instructors to educators was not one which could be easily realised, nor could it be brought about by coercion. Ryerson made his views known, particularly in his Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada and gradually others came to think similarly. Ryerson's methods of propogation of his ideas will be discussed in the next chapter. In the meantime, we should consider the question of education as a preparation for employment.

4. Education for Employment

Many people could not see any practical value in education and it was Ryerson's aim to include in his system training which would be of benefit to students in their employment. This would range from basic literacy and numeracy to more specific mercantile and industrial training.

In the period of settlement in Upper Canada, every capable pair of hands was needed in the home or on the land

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79. "The Origin, Condition and Progress of Schools in St. Thomas, 1853 by James H. Coyne", ibid., I, p. 189 - 193.

in order to guarantee the very existence of the family. John Eckford, the Local Superintendent for the Eastern District of Bruce County commented, in his Report for 1856, that he could not urge greater efforts from people because "the settlers have in general exhausted their funds in the purchase and improvement of lands, and in supporting their families before they obtained an adequate return from the soil".[80] Time spent in the school room represented in many cases the loss of so much earning time.

In these conditions, the usefulness of education was not easy to see. The writer of a letter in the early 1820s made this point. He was, admittedly, writing of a time some years before the period of this study, but it was apparent that each new settlement tended to follow the same historical process of development, both in material terms and in attitudes to education. The writer pointed out that people could not see that education would make their sons better hewers of wood or their daughters better spinners of flax. Indeed, he claimed, learning was not always to be found among the people's representatives in the Provincial Parliament. Some members, called to be Chairmen of Committees had to ask other members to read bills before the committee, and to ask these proxies to write notes for them

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80. Report of the Local Superintendent for Bruce County, Eastern District, 1856, ibid., II, p. 125.

of acceptance or rejection of clauses.[81]

The stratagems of illiterate members of Parliament showed that a knowledge of the "three Rs" could have had its uses, but there was to be found opposition to the teaching of anything other than those subjects. The Inspector for Grey County South reported as late as 1877, "In a few School Sections there exists a strong prejudice against instruction in any other than the three Rs -- Reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic; the teaching of Grammar, Geography, etcetera, being by some strongly opposed."[82]

From the date of the previous statement, it can be seen that this was an attitude which died hard: indeed many teachers would suggest that it is one with which they must struggle in schools a century later.

The editor of the Globe attacked Ryerson's plans to provide more than a basic education. Quoting Ryerson's statement in his Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, "The knowledge required for the scientific pursuit of Mechanics, Agriculture, and Commerce, must needs be provided to an extent corresponding with the demand and exigencies of the country", he claimed that Ryerson was urging the provision of more education than was truly required. With a degree of

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81. Letter in a series written by E.A. Talbot, published in London,1824, Putman, op. cit., p. 45.

82. Report of the Inspector for Grey County South, 1877, Hodgins, op. cit., II, p. 135.

inconsistency, the editorial continued by conceding that there was a need for "greater and better facilities for education in the learned Professions than we now have", but generally the Globe could see limits to the amount of education needed by a person.[83]

Egerton Ryerson's view was that his system of education should be "practical", the adjective he used to describe it in his 1846 Report.[84] He was aware of the benefits to the economic system of the country of such education. The basic skills should be taught but, in addition, there must be such education as would prepare people for employment. "All must learn to read, to write, to calculate, to use their native tongue, -- the farmer as well as the lawyer, the mechanic as well as the physician; in addition to which, each must learn that which will give him skill in his own peculiar employment."[85] The greatest need, he felt, was in the mechanical, commercial and agricultural areas, with a higher education for the professions "to a more limited extent".[86]

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83. Editorial, Globe, 20 January 1847, p. 18.

84. Hodgins, Doc. Hist., VI, p. 146.

85. Ryerson, "The Importance of Education to an Agricultural People", 1847, ibid., VII, p. 141.

86. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, ibid., VI, p. 142.

He would provide a continuous system of public education from the primary level to University. All students would begin with some elementary instruction. Some would of necessity leave at the end of this stage but he intended that they "would enter life with a sound elementary education". Others would go into trade or business training, mainly in the English High Schools which he hoped to establish at the rate of one or more to each Town or City. Here would be taught "the higher branches of a thorough mercantile education".[87] For others, there would be Grammar Schools and University. "Each school would occupy its appropriate place, and each Teacher would have his appropriate work." Progress to each stage would depend on a pupil having the appropriate admission qualifications.[88]

With this plan in mind, Ryerson justified each subject he intended to place in the curriculum. "The importance of Arithmetic to the common interests of life can scarcely be over-rated." Arithmetic leads to accounting, and book-keeping is of great importance to a mechanic, a farmer, a tradesman or a merchant. "Every person, male or female, should be taught to keep personal accounts."[89] Agriculture, not generally considered a subject for study in school should be introduced. Success or failure in agriculture could decide on the very existence of a settle-

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87. Statement to Governor General in Council, 27 March 1847, Journal of Education, (January 1848), p. 12.

88. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, Hodgins, op. cit., VI, p. 197.

89. Ibid., VI, p. 176 - 8.

ment and Ryerson referred to it as "the most important department of human industry". Progress in agriculture, he pointed out, would not be made until it was seriously studied. The influence of Natural Philosophy "upon the three great branches of industry, -- agriculture, commerce, and the mechanical arts, cannot be over-rated", and so its place, too, was justified.[90] A great part of Ryerson's Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada is devoted to a consideration of each subject and an explanation of its place in the curriculum. Each time, Ryerson was quite unequivocal in stating the necessity for each subject in his education scheme.

Education, in Ryerson's view, could be of benefit in employment without being specifically directed towards this goal. "Educated labour is more productive than uneducated labour," he said.[91] Its benefits for productivity formed a strong weapon in Ryerson's arsenal. Education, he pointed out, can contribute to a farmer's gain as well as his happiness. "It is power created and labour saved", achieved through the study of chemistry and mechanics. On the economical advantages of education to people, he said, "It is the advantage, which it gives them in persuing [sic] their business in the most economical and profitable manner:

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90. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, ibid., VI, p. 192.

91. Ryerson, Address to Second School Convention, 1853, ibid., XI, p. 44.

it contributes to their gain, as well as to their happiness."[92]

As industrial development progressed, education would provide other important benefits. The replacement of brute labour by machinery meant that "mental superiority, system, order, punctuality and good conduct, -- qualities all developed and promoted by education, -- are becoming of the highest consequence".[93]

Not only those going out to work should be educated for their employment for, in addition to the basic education intended for everyone, those destined to be farmers' wives should receive instruction in special areas of benefit to them in their work -- "the botany of the garden and fields, and the chemistry of the kitchen and dairy".[94]

The subject of education for employment did not arouse a great deal of enthusiasm generally. On the whole, schooling was an activity to be sought when opportunities for employment were absent.[95] Popular interest in education began to be aroused when Ryerson had carried his plans to

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92. Ryerson, "The Importance of Education to an Agricultural People", Journal of Education, (September 1848), p. 257 - 268.

93. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, Hodgins, op. cit., VI, p. 145.

94. Ryerson, op. cit., Journal of Education, (September 1848), p. 257 - 268.

95. Houston, op. cit.

the people by means of his lecture tours and his publicity through his Journal of Education, and when the fruits of his system were seen as it began to yield. "It was not until 1855, the year in which London became a City, that the machinery of Doctor Ryerson's System came into full operation."[96] There was, in this matter, little question of Ryerson pushing aside criticism, for there was little of it, either in opposition or in favour.

A degree of support came when the British Colonist declared that the "highest conception of what constitutes the essential requisites of an educational system" was partly represented by "the acquisition of knowledge as a means of mechanical and commercial power".[97]

In one of its rare commendations of educational activities under Egerton Ryerson in his early years in office, the Globe applauded the opening of an Industrial School, though it is likely that the editor was more particularly pleased because the school was intended specifically to teach a trade to vagrant and orphan children.[98]

In one matter, it seems that Ryerson did not immediately have his way, though the reason is not clear. It

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96. C.B. Edwards, "Establishment of Schools in London, Ontario", Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, I; p. 111 - 125.

97. Quoted in Editorial, Globe, 19 December 1846, page number indecipherable.

98. Editorial, ibid., 28 February 1849, p. 66.

was, perhaps, merely a question of human or bureaucratic procrastination, although it would seem from an incident related in a later chapter, that warring factions in the local government of Toronto led to disruption of the schools in that city, causing them to be closed down for a year. There may have been a similar reason for the delay in this instance.

A number of Toronto Working Mechanics were anxious for the establishment of "a Provincial School of Art and Design, where youths intended for the various Artistical and Mechanical businesses, could be prepared for entering with advantage upon their apprenticeships".[99] This was in January 1849 and the following month, Ryerson recommended the establishment of such a school.[100] This scheme did not meet with support, however, for Hodgins tells us, "Instead of the School of Art being established, a College of Technology for the education of Mechanics and others was organized and put into operation in Toronto" -- but not until 1871.[101]

5. A non-sectarian, Christian education.

A person with a broad education, prepared for citizen-

99. Hodgins, Doc. Hist., VIII, p. 112.

100. Explanatory remarks accompanying Draft School Bill, February 1849, ibid., VIII, p. 214.

101. Ibid., VIII, p. 112, footnote.

ship and employment, was incomplete in Egerton Ryerson's eyes unless his education had had a Christian foundation. The education system therefore should be based on Christianity but, through being non-sectarian in its approach, should be suitable for all. Fiorino suggests that Ryerson chose a non-sectarian system in view of the Christian pluralism existing in Upper Canada, since, considering the other possibilities of a purely sectarian or a purely secular system, this was the most expedient way. He shows that the idea of expedience in this case, should be interpreted as being "for the general happiness of all concerned". Fiorino goes on to point out that there is a conflict here with the idea of universality since a universal non-sectarian system should cater equally well to Christians and non-Christians. He notes that, although Jews were not numerous in Upper Canada in Ryerson's time, they were an increasing group.[102]

In an editorial on "Dr Ryerson's Report",[103] the Globe poured scorn on the idea that a comprehensive course of biblical and religious instruction could be given without infringing on sectarian susceptibilities -- "even Mr. Ryerson

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102. Albert F. Fiorino, The Philosophical Roots of Egerton Ryerson's idea of education as elaborated in his writings preceding and including the Report of 1846, (Ph.D. dissertation, Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1975), p. 241.

103. i.e. The Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846.

would trip in performing the task".[104] The Church Society, of which Bishop Strachan was president, was of similar mind. "The Education, which is afforded in our Common Schools, is, in consequence of the unhappy religious divisions amongst us, intended to embrace all, and, therefore, it is almost entirely of a secular nature; and every attempt to render it, in any practical way, truly religious, must be expected to fail, because, under such circumstances, God's truth must be suppressed in part, in order that those who receive the whole truth may be enabled to combine with those who receive only a part of it.[105]

It was unlikely that Bishop Strachan and Ryerson would be of a like mind on matters concerning an amalgamation of religion and education. As editor of the Christian Guardian, Ryerson, a Methodist, had attacked attempts by Bishop Strachan and the Church of England minority to make the Church of England the established church in Upper Canada. Before becoming Bishop of Toronto, John Strachan had been chairman of the General Board of Education for Upper Canada and Strachan's championship of the traditional classical grammar school over the common school, favoured by reformers of similar mind to Ryerson, had been one of the factors leading to the disbandment of the General Board of Education

104. Editorial, Globe, 20 January 1847, p. 18.

105. Annual Report of the Church Society, 1846, Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 201.

in 1833. It was not re-established until 1846.

The same dispute was one of the causes of the Rebellion of 1837. Members of the "Family Compact", including well-to-do Anglican citizens, sought to have an élitist education system, while Reformers demanded common schools for all. Therefore, in matters of education, Bishop Strachan was of élitist leaning, while Ryerson tended towards liberal views.

Although Ryerson intended to put no compulsion on children to attend even the opening and closing religious exercises of each school day, when there would be the reading of a portion of Scripture or a prayer, there was a strong element of public opinion opposed to any form of religious observance in schools. The Globe agreed that there should be as much religious instruction as possible but, apparently misunderstanding Ryerson's intentions, declared, "We protest against compulsory religious instruction, both in theory and in practice." Religious Instruction should be "subject to the wishes of parents or guardians, and trustees elected by them".[106]

It is probable that George Brown understood perfectly well Ryerson's intention not to make religious instruction compulsory for all pupils but the topic provided a very

106. Editorial, Globe, 3 February 1847, p. 38.

satisfactory weapon to level at Ryerson and his plans. The Education Act of 1846 caused the Home District Council to fear that it might "open up the way for the introduction and establishment of sectional, [sic] or Denominational, Schools", [107] while the Globe thundered that it was "Retrograde Legislation". [108] The Common School System had received a death blow because trustees were now able to decide whether schools should be "denominational or mixed". It should be recalled that the Globe, in almost the same breath, had declared that trustees should make decisions regarding the teaching of Religious Instruction.

George Brown feared that the "High Church party", the Tories, would use the clause to gain control of the schools, in order "to get the children within their grasp". [109] The School law "was framed with the design of throwing the education of the youth of Canada into the hands of the High Church Party . . . . Now a High Church majority of the Council can regulate the Schools as they think fit." Schools could, therefore, be made denominational and before long, they would all be "High Episcopal" (that is, Church of England) in the country districts. [110]

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107. Home District Council Report on the Common School Act of 1846, 1848, Hodgins, op.cit., VII, p.122.
108. Editorial, Globe, 14 August 1847, p.258
109. Ibid.
110. Editorial, ibid. 10 May 1848, p.150

The fear regarding the establishment of denominational, or separate, schools was strong and George Brown found it convenient to foster the fear. However, he was forced to admit, rather lamely, in the middle of a tirade about "High Church majorities", "It is true they have not acted very arbitrarily yet -- but they have the power."[111]

The Globe watched warily all movements in this area and commented in 1858 that the number of separate schools "is undoubtedly increasing",[112] and the following day, while reporting the foundation of a separate school in York, wailed, "Thus the destruction of our common school system progresses under priestly influence."[113]

As the Globe thundered, Malcolm Cameron moved swiftly and almost silently. While members of the Government and Ryerson thought that the Assistant Commissioner of Public Works was presenting to the House a bill based on drafts prepared by Ryerson, he substituted the bill which became known as the "Cameron Act". This Act of 1849 took the major progressive changes that Ryerson had introduced and replaced them by a series of retrograde measures. Of particular note at this point was an order for the removal of all books containing "Controverted Theological Dogmas or Doctrines". Ryerson retorted that this would mean the

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111. Ibid.

112. Editorial, ibid., 19 January 1858, p. 2.

113. Editorial, ibid., 20 January 1858, p. 2.

removal of all religious books and the Scriptures themselves, which may have been what was intended. "I think," he said, "there is too little Christianity in our Schools, instead of too much."[114]

During his lecture on "The Importance of Education to an Agricultural People", Ryerson said, "I do not regard any instruction, discipline, or attainments, as Education, which does not include Christianity"[115], and his first Regulation under the Common School Act of 1846 contained the command, "As Christianity is the basis of our whole system of Elementary Education, that principle should pervade it throughout."[116] Paying no attention to the opposition recounted above, all of which occurred between 1846 and 1849, Ryerson repeated the same instruction in 1850, adding that example and precept were important as the means of impressing upon children the principles of justice, humanity and universal benevolence, amongst other virtues.[117] Two years later, he commented further, in a letter, "I think Education and Schools fail to fulfil a vital part of their mission if they do not develope [sic] all the intellectual

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114. Letter to Robert Baldwin, Attorney-General, 14 July 1849, Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 240.

115. Ibid., VII, p. 148.

116. Ibid., VI, p. 299.

117. "General Regulations for the Organisation, Government and Discipline of Common Schools in Upper Canada. August 1850", ibid., IX, p. 197.

powers of man, teach him self-reliance, as well as dependence on God."[118]

Ryerson's Wesleyan Methodism led him to believe that the basis of the Good Life was the Word of God as revealed in the Scriptures. "Christianity," he wrote in 1832, "furnishes the only authoritative and unerring rule of moral action."[119] Fiorino shows in his examination of the philosophical roots of Ryerson's ideas, that to Ryerson, a true moral life was a Christian one and was the means devised by God, to restore man to his original state of perfection. "Any education system, if it is to be truly an efficacious instrument of man's happiness, must be founded upon the principles of Christianity."[120]

Although Ryerson was adamant in demanding the teaching of religion in schools, this was a far cry from the compulsory religious instruction feared by his critics. Perhaps it is fair to say that it was the Christian attitude rather than Christian dogma which Ryerson was anxious to have per-

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118. Letter to Bishop de Charbonnel of Toronto, 24 April 1852, ibid., X, p. 188.

119. Ryerson, Editorial, Christian Guardian, 18 January, 1832, p. 116.

120. Fiorino, op. cit., p. 88, 96 - 7.

vading his system. Indeed, he felt that the absence of religious teaching in American schools was having a damaging effect on the moral fibre of that nation.[121] "Without a Christian Education," he commented, "there will not long be a Christian Country."[122]

It was not Ryerson's intention to turn schools into evangelistic centres. He believed that parents and pastors were "the divinely authorised and appointed Teachers of Religious Education", while teachers, licensed, appointed and paid by the State "are employed to impart to youth their secular education".[123] Indeed, Ryerson had commented earlier, in regard to the pattern in Lower Canada, "We . . . regret to observe that the censorship of religious books is given to children."[124]

In a letter written in 1844, Ryerson referred to his planned system of education from Common Schools to University as "being connected and harmonious throughout, and equally embracing all classes, without respect to religious sect, or political party",[125] and, in his great Report on a System

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121. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, Hodgins, op. cit., VI, p. 142.

122. Ibid., VI, p. 150.

123. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1855, ibid., XI, p. 284 - 299.

124. Editorial on Report for 1846 - 7 by Superintendent of Education for Lower Canada, Journal of Education (August 1848), p. 248.

125. Letter to the Honourable W.H. Merritt, June 1844, Hodgins, J. George (ed.), Historical Educational Papers and Documents of Ontario, Vols I - VI, (Toronto, King's Printer, 1911), Vol. I, p. 157.

of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada of 1846, he had explained, "By Religion and Morality I do not mean sectarianism in any form, but the general system of truth and morals taught in the Holy Scriptures."[126] This he expanded in his Report of 1847 to "the inculcation of the doctrines and spirit of the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, and the discretionary use of the Holy Scriptures".[127]

Ryerson felt justified in seeking to inject this amount of religious instruction into the system because, in his opinion much of the contemporary teaching was of a kind "which unchristianizes four-fifths, if not nine-tenths, of Christendom".[128]

Contrary to the opinion of George Brown, Ryerson believed possible "a course embracing the entire History of the Bible, its institutions, cardinal doctrines and morals, together with the evidences of its authenticity".[129] Such a course, he firmly believed, could transcend sectarian boundaries. One feature of the Irish National Series of textbooks which Ryerson found appealing was that

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126. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., VI, p. 147.

127. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 165.

128. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, ibid., VI, p. 147.

129. Ibid., VI, p. 148

expressed in the publisher's prospectus, "There is nothing sectarian."[130]

Ryerson was not thinking only of the schools in this matter. He felt that the upper echelon of the system also should reflect the non-sectarian quality he sought elsewhere. During his speech for the opening of the Normal School, he said that the Board of Education "should embrace, as far as possible, a fair representation of the leading Religious Persuasions of Upper Canada."[131]

Compulsion was not part of the pattern, however. Had George Brown chosen to refer to the Education Act of 1846, he need not have thundered against compulsory religious instruction. This was clearly not Ryerson's intention. The Act contained the words, "No child shall be required to read, or study in, or from, any Religious Book, or to join in any exercise of devotion, or religion, which shall be objected to by his, or her, parents, or guardians."[132]

If Upper Canadian society was to be, as Ryerson obviously hoped, a Christian society, if only in its general attitudes, it would seem that Ryerson's aim to provide an education system with a Christian basis was reasonable. Such specific Christian material he proposed to present was limited to that accepted

130. Publisher's Prospectus, 1846, ibid., VI, p. 276.

131. Speech, 1 November 1847, ibid., VII, p. 98.

132. "Act for the Better Establishment and Maintenance of Common Schools in Upper Canada." 9th Victoria, Chapter XX, Section xxxi.

by most people who are labelled Christian, and there was ample provision for withdrawal by those who considered even this too much.

Admittedly, Ryerson did not denounce or ban separate schools as George Brown would have had him do. Ryerson acknowledged in his Report for 1847, that local school authorities could decide to establish a denominational school -- they, after all, were the ones who "provide the greater part of the local School Fund" -- but he summed up his attitude to separate schools by saying: "I believe the fewer of these Separate Schools the better for the interests of youth, and the diffusion of General Education; but it is perhaps, better to leave the Law as it is, in respect of Separate Schools, than to have an agitation arising from the repeal of it."[133]

Ryerson's lack of sympathy for separate schools and his preference for a system in which no sect had prominence may be related to his attacks in the Christian Guardian on those members of the Church of England who sought to make it the established church in Upper Canada. His opinion was that all churches had their place -- "I believe there are fields of labour which may be occupied by any one of those Churches with more efficiency and success than by any of

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133. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 167 & p. 178.

the others" -- but none should have precedence.[134]

Ryerson proceeded, confident that his non-sectarian aims would be realised. He had no doubt, as he claimed to the Marquis of Lansdowne, that his system of education was fair to all, Christian and non-sectarian[135] and, in his Report for 1852, wrote, "The youth of all classes of the population have equal access to the advantages of the Schools; the Religious Faith of all is equally protected; and the interests of all equally consulted."[136]

Ryerson proceeded, stating the pattern as he wanted it, but in the early years of his superintendency, the situation in the schools was not always according to Ryerson's aims. In this matter, reports from Inspectors and Superintendents indicate that at least the motions of Religious Instruction were being made. In 1847, the Bible and New Testament were in use in 2,067 of the 3,059 Common Schools, nearly two thirds, "a fact," commented Ryerson, "which sufficiently refutes the wrongful mis-statement . . . that 'Christianity is not recognized in our School System.'"[137] The proportion remained the

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134. Letter to The Church, official organ of the Church of England in Upper Canada, 21 December 1841, Ryerson, Story of My Life, p. 293.

135. Ibid., p. 516.

136. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1852, Hodgins, op. cit., X, p. 294.

137. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 164.

same in 1850[138] and 1,003 out of 3,325 schools were reported to open and close with prayer in 1855, this being an increase of 520 over the previous year's figures.[139]

A report on the progress of Hamilton City Schools between 1850 and 1868 gives some detail. "The Local Superintendent states that the General Regulations in reference to Religious Instruction are carried out to the extent of reading the Scriptures and repeating the Lord's Prayer every morning, and the Ten Commandments twice a week."[140]

The report goes on in a way that suggests that the effect of such religious instruction was only partly in keeping with Ryerson's aims. "Reading the Word of God has a soothing effect on Teachers and Pupils; while the Lord's Prayer brings them all, it is hoped, nearer to Him whose words they have repeated."

For Bishop Strachan, the situation could have been better. He would have preferred religion to have been "taught systematically by its great Doctrines and Creeds" and commented in his Charge to Synod in May, 1851 that people "are apt to think, that, because some of the Books consist of

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138. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1850, ibid., IX, p. 165 - 7.

139. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1855, ibid., XI, p. 284 - 299.

140. Author Unknown, "A Nineteen Years' Record of the Progress of the Grammar and Common Schools in Hamilton", Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, I, p. 72 - 76.

partial portions of Scripture, there is some Religion taught."[141] In his Charge five years later, he declared that the school system was "almost entirely dead" from a moral and religious point of view. With heavy irony, he said, "We find that 454 schools open and close with prayer. This is an important step in the right direction, and only requires a reasonable extension to render the system in its interior, as it is already in its exterior, nearly complete."[142]

As with the state of affairs concerning Religious Instruction towards the end of the first decade, there was a mixture of satisfaction and dissatisfaction regarding the areas of the system of education considered in this chapter. Hodgins, always a devoted admirer of Ryerson, felt that, by 1854, the education system was being successfully developed and that attitudes of the people were improved in favour of Ryerson's aims. He wrote of their "sympathies and enthusiasm".[143] Ryerson, too, felt that attitudes were becoming more favourable. He expressed himself very satisfied with the way in which the Act of 1850 went through the Legislature. He had been impressed by "the careful and protracted examination and discussion of all its details." He commented, "The pro-

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141. Bishop John Strachan, Charge, Synod of Toronto, 1851, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., X, p. 92.

142. Bishop John Strachan, Charge, Synod of Toronto, 1856, Ryerson, Story of My Life, p. 567.

143. Hodgins, op. cit., XI, p. 236.

ceedings of the Legislature indicate that this Act was no party measure": it was truly a Provincial measure. Indeed, he saw in it a vote of confidence in himself as Chief Superintendent after the doubts indicated by the "Cameron" Act, and approval for all his measures to date.[144] It was this Act which formed the basis for future development of the education system of Upper Canada and was dubbed by Hodgins "the Charter of the School System of Upper Canada".[145]

Changes were taking place as Ryerson intended, but gradually. This gradual speed, as will be shown in the following chapter, was also as Ryerson intended. His speaking tour had contributed greatly towards the improvement of public attitudes towards education. Ryerson had made clear public statements of his aims in regard to education for life and citizenship and he had explained the value of reaching these aims in terms of the benefits to the economy and the work force. On the whole, people concerned could understand and appreciate his wishes. Improvements were already being noticed.

Areas of dissatisfaction have already been mentioned. There was support for Ryerson's aims but a feeling in some areas that they were not being achieved and, in the prevailing conditions, could not be achieved. There was criticism that important subjects were being neglected in spite of Ryerson's

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144. Editorial, Journal of Education, (August 1850), p. 125 - 6.

145. Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 223.

advocacy of a broadened curriculum. The Globe tended to find fault with every move that Ryerson made though always it was apparent that its attacks were levelled more at Egerton Ryerson personally than at his aims for education. Ryerson did not allow them to turn him aside.

Many people had no time for education but this was usually because they did literally lack the time for such a luxury. As each new settlement was begun, survival and then establishment demanded constant hard work, but gradually the battle was won and there was time to listen to Ryerson's ideas. From this, there arose criticism and opposition but usually, as a result of his reasonable and firm persistence, people came to see the value of what Ryerson was proposing.

The exception was in the area of Religious Instruction where the battle continued as to the kind and the quantity that should be taught and as to whether non-sectarian education was or should be possible.

In spite of attacks and criticisms, Ryerson seemed almost always, to be able to carry the public along with him, allowing his opponents to make but little effect on his progress. Much of his success in this field stemmed from his skilful use of what has come to be called public relations, and it is this topic which will be considered next.

CHAPTER II

EDUCATION AND THE COMMUNITY

It is easier to carry through a plan of campaign if those for whom it is intended can be made sympathetic to it. Consequently, Ryerson aimed to make the general public feel involvement in his system of education and in the decisions made. He hoped to do this by keeping the people informed about his plans and his intentions, so that measures coming into effect would seem to be the will of the people rather than the will of the Chief Superintendent. In reality, though, the will of the Chief Superintendent carried great weight, for Ryerson felt it necessary for the Chief Superintendent to have supreme control over the system.

This chapter will consider Ryerson's work and criticism of it in the relations between the central administration and the members of the community. The main areas studied will be firstly, the question as to whether Ryerson's qualifications made him, in fact, a suitable choice as Chief Superintendent; secondly, Ryerson's attempts to centralise control, since these were the mainspring of his policy; then the possibility that through foreign influence, he was trying to impose upon Upper Canada a system unrelated to the needs of

the community; and finally, the effectiveness of Ryerson's attempts at communication with both his subordinates and the people.

1. The suitability of Ryerson as Chief Superintendent.

A ploy frequently used by opponents of a policy is to seek to prove that the policy is valueless because of the unacceptability of its originator. Ryerson's opponents followed this practice by trying to show that he was an unsuitable choice for the post of Chief Superintendent of Education. As we shall see, it was suggested that he was hungry for power and that he gave little consideration to the particular needs of Upper Canada. Regarding his unsuitability, the lines of attack were that he was intellectually unsound, lacked appropriate knowledge and was incompetent.

Almost all criticism on these grounds came from George Brown of the Globe, who sought, sometimes in what seems puerile fashion, to discredit Ryerson. Frequently, in editorials, Brown would attack Ryerson's literary style or use of syntax, obviously with the intention of showing that so unlettered a man was not fit to lead an education system. One may cite an editorial designed to attack "Mr. Ryerson's Report on Education".[1] The very title, using the plain "Mr" rather than

1. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846.

"Dr" or even "The Reverend Doctor", was an insult of a low order and one which Brown used frequently. The editorial began with adverse criticism of "the peculiar rhetoric" in the report and "the grammatical blunders with which it abounds". Only then does the writer begin to comment on the matter of the report itself.[2]

Personal attacks designed to hold up Ryerson to ridicule had taken place before his appointment as Chief Superintendent. While Ryerson was Principal of Victoria College, the editor of the Globe had suggested that Ryerson was a political puppet. Ryerson had written to the Globe supporting the Governor-General's power to rule without the consent of a council chosen by the people, a power to which the Globe was opposed. It may be remarked that Ryerson's attitude was consistent with his belief that the Chief Superintendent should rule without being encumbered by a Provincial Board of Education, while, in that matter also, the Globe supported the power of the representative body. The Globe sneered, "The Reverend Gentleman informs us that he has never been offered any political office. This is a great mistake of the Governor, and the sooner it is remedied the better. . . . We are not qualified to name the office which this gentleman should hold, but we presume he will act as the Legal Beau

2. Editorial, The Globe, Toronto, 6 January 1847, p. 6. See also editorials 20 January 1847 and 24 February 1847 for further examples of attacks on Ryerson's style, use of grammar and syntax.

Nash of the Council."[3] A week later, the Globe dubbed Ryerson "the Reverend champion of the Governor-General".[4]

The Globe was not alone in attacking Ryerson in personal terms. Even his fellow churchmen turned on him. A meeting of Methodist church officials and local preachers was called in July 1844 to consider Ryerson's appointment as Assistant Superintendent of Education. A statement of their decision was sent to members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada. A copy of the statement was published in the Globe.[5] The meeting feared that Ryerson's attempt to use the columns of the Christian Guardian -- the "well-known organ of the Conference", as they called it -- in his rôle of "'unsolicited' defender of the Governor General", together with what they saw as his political appointment, would suggest a link between Methodism and politics. Their personal opinion of Ryerson would seem to have sunk very low for they felt "that Mr Ryerson would not hesitate to make any sacrifice to accomplish his ambitious purposes". There would seem some justice in their attitude for they claimed that had Ryerson conducted his campaign as a private individual, without "sacrificing" the Methodist Church, or its journal, for his purpose, they would have made no complaint.

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3. Editorial, ibid., 11 June 1844, page number indecipherable.

4. Editorial, ibid., 18 June 1844, page number indecipherable.

5. Statement, 5 July 1844, ibid., 16 July 1844, page number indecipherable.

Another form of denigration practised against Ryerson by the Globe was to set Ryerson in an inferior position to his subordinates. When the Normal School was opened with formal ceremony in November 1847, the occasion was noticed by the Globe. Scorn was poured on the speech made by Ryerson, but those speeches given by the Head Master and a teacher received praise from the writer.[6]

While most of the personal attacks on Ryerson which appear in the Globe are delivered as though with a bludgeon, one occasionally finds a smooth delivery more akin to a thrust with a stiletto. A correspondent to the Globe had complained of Ryerson's advertising the Journal of Education in circulars headed "Education Office", thereby inferring that it was not his own publication but an official one.[7] It does seem that the correspondent was right to complain thus, since Ryerson did not succeed in making the Journal the official organ of the Education Office until 1850, nearly two years later.[8] The Globe supported the unnamed correspondent's complaint and took the opportunity to add the comment, "In such a work there is necessarily much of which all will approve, as the great mass of it consists of quotations from

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6. Editorial report, "Opening of the Normal School", ibid., 6 November 1847, p. 352.

7. Editorial, ibid., 2 December 1848, p. 386.

8. Announcement, Egerton Ryerson (ed.), Journal of Education, Toronto, (July 1850), p. 112.

other works, but it is impossible to be too guarded against all views which are his own."

The Globe was particularly infuriated by Ryerson's tour of Europe and America and by what it considered the little produced from it. Ryerson's contention that he sought only to draw the best from other countries' systems was ignored and the Globe castigated Ryerson for months of "amusement and recreation", for "professing to get information about things which every person knew already" and for producing no new ideas.[9] The situation was, surely, that even if this knowledge was held so widely, it was only Ryerson who had come forward to make use of it in Upper Canada.

Later in 1848, the Globe was to charge that in one area, at least, Ryerson had no knowledge. The Globe refused to allow any credit to Ryerson for setting up a Normal School. "We do not believe," wrote George Brown, "that Dr. Ryerson has either information or education sufficient to have set the Normal School in motion, or to have brought it to its present state. We believe the Head Teacher, Mr. Robertson, has been the chief means," ably supported by the other teachers.[10]

It was Ryerson's policy to write circulars and letters

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9. Editorial, Globe, 29 April 1848, p. 138.

10. Editorial, ibid., 9 December 1848, p. 394.

in order to pass throughout the system the information he wished to communicate and, in order to obtain information by efficient means, he designed forms which were to be submitted by local authorities. More will be said of these below. The Globe was very scornful of Ryerson's reports and communications. In the first two and a half years of his office, it claimed, he had written 48 pages of "waste paper", two or three circulars and "his little block of forms!"[11] Obviously, the Globe sought to make an impression rather than to provide statistical accuracy, for in Hodgins' collection of historical documents, the Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada of 1846 runs, alone, to well over 48 pages.[12] It is possible, however, that the writer of the editorial was referring only to those pages he considered of no greater worth than mere "waste paper".

Statistics can always provide fuel for argument and criticism. The accuracy of the statistics produced by Ryerson at various times, particularly in the early years of his administration, was very much at the mercy of the local officials providing them, and, as will be seen, there were some figures given which, it would appear, Ryerson would have done better not to pass on.

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11. Editorial, ibid., 3 February 1847, p. 38.

12. J. George Hodgins, Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada, Vol. VI, (Toronto, L.K. Cameron, 1894 - 1910), p. 140 - 211.

The Globe seized on what it claimed were errors in the Chief Superintendent's Report for 1848. The Globe claimed that 2,934 qualified male teachers were reported and 502 qualified female teachers, making a total of 3,436. However, the total number of qualified teachers given in gross was 2,836. The Globe commented, "Such a glaring discrepancy is rather calculated to shake confidence in the accuracy of the Report."[13]

A writer signing himself "Observer" sent a letter to the Globe claiming that the figures published by Ryerson in the Journal of Education were misleading. Ryerson, he said, published only the "Number of children of school age" and the "Number of children on the rolls or taught", omitting "average attendance", although all three sections were required to be completed on the forms. The writer claimed that Ryerson was suggesting a greater degree of success in attendance than there was in fact and was also thereby reducing the apparent cost of education per pupil.

He went on to express doubt concerning the figures quoted in the Journal of Education for the free schools of Niagara and commented that they showed that "716 pupils attended the Common Schools for the entire year 1848, out of a School population of 668. . . . This seems like a second miracle of the 'Loaves and Fishes', in favour of the Free

13. Editorial, Globe, 16 August 1849, p. 282.

School system."[14]

The accuracy of figures themselves depended upon correct collecting and reporting by local officials who, at first, were not experienced in the provision of statistics and Ryerson cannot reasonably be held completely responsible for them; but where Ryerson comments on figures or draws conclusions from them, it does seem reasonable to expect that he would do this with care. There would seem to be a grave error in his interpretation of figures of gross average attendance quoted in his Reports for 1848 and 1849. In the Report for 1848, Ryerson gives the following:[15]

Summer 1847	84,537	Winter 1847	89,991
Summer 1848	112,000	Winter 1848	114,800

He claims in his Report for 1849 that the figures for that year are an increase "of nearly Two Thousand" for the Summer, and "a considerable increase" for the Winter on those for 1848, whereas they show a decrease of over 35,000 in each case, and, indeed, are lower than those for 1847:[16]

Summer 1849	72,204	Winter 1849	78,466

The situation is made complex by the fact that, in a General Statistical Abstract 1842 - 1850, published with the

14. Letter, ibid., 19 July 1849, p. 135. Correspondent's italics. Figures quoted in Journal of Education, (June 1849), p. 88 - 9.

15. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1848, Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 95 - 6.

16. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1849, ibid., VIII, p. 273.

Chief Superintendent's Report for 1850,[17] Ryerson quotes the figures given above for the Summer and Winter of 1849 as net average attendances of pupils at Common Schools. For 1848, under the same heading, he gives:

Summer 1848 70,459 Winter 1848 76,711

These figures justify Ryerson's claims for increases for the periods of 1849 over 1848, but for 1847; he claims in the General Statistical Abstract that there were "No Reports" for Summer or Winter, in spite of his having earlier given the figures quoted above.

It is interesting to note also a discrepancy of minor importance but of quite obvious nature in two accounts by Ryerson of the passage through the Legislature of the Cameron Bill to which he objected so much. In a letter to Robert Baldwin, Attorney-General, written in July 1849, Ryerson told how the bill of 31 pages had passed through the House of Assembly in two hours.[18] When writing to the Provincial Secretary the following December, Ryerson referred to the bill as having 49 octavo pages and as having been passed in "a single hour".[19]

In his criticism of the Cameron Bill, Ryerson gave figures that did not entirely prove his point. The Bill

17. Ibid., IX, p. 174.
18. Letter, 14 July 1849, ibid., VIII, p. 232 - 243.
19. Letter, 7 December 1849, ibid., VIII, p. 247.

sought to remove the Clergy and Magistrates from the office of Official School Visitors, but Ryerson objected that the existing system was working well, quoting figures to make his point. Visits by Magistrates in 1847 he gave as 1,203 and in 1848, 1,459. These figures do, indeed, show an increase, but his figures regarding visits by the Clergy show the opposite: 1847 -- 1,823 visits; 1848 -- 959 visits, slightly more than half.[20]

Ryerson was occasionally guilty of an infelicitous phrase or even a grammatical inaccuracy; there are instances of apparent misuse of figures in his reports; he did prefer to grasp the reins of educational government himself; and he did rely greatly on other people's experience in fashioning his education scheme. It does, however, seem unjust to declare him unsuitable for the post of Chief Superintendent of Education because of these faults or weaknesses, which was evidently the aim of many of his critics.

Ryerson was aware that his early reports contained statistical deficiencies but he still felt that the figures he received from his subordinate officers were of value. Referring to the 1847 Report, he said that it "is of a varied and most important character and will serve as the basis of

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20. Egerton Ryerson, "Objections to the New School Bill of the Honourable Malcolm Cameron", 12 May 1849, ibid., VIII, p. 225 - 230.

useful inquiries, calculations and improvements in the Common Schools of every Municipal District in Upper Canada."[21] His demand for statistics meant that each local official was forced eventually to give serious consideration to the area for which he was responsible.

At least one District Superintendent was aware that statistics reaching him from the schools in his district were lacking in accuracy. Reporting to his District Council in 1849, P. Thornton, the School Superintendent for Gore District, commented on the returns for 1848: "One section reports 80 pupils on the list, or educated . . . total number in Section 65. Now, I do not believe that a single pupil ever attended that School from any neighbouring Section . . . . Another School reports 110 on the list, 2 indigent, whole number 122, -- 54 boys and 68 girls, total number in the Section, 100."[22] It is obvious that mathematics was not a strong point with teachers in that district.

The figures submitted concerning school houses drew Ryerson's scorn in his own Report for 1849. The statistics he had received showed that the total number of school houses was 312 less than the number given for 1848. He commented, "We cannot suppose that Three Hundred and Twelve School Houses

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21. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 175.

22. Report of the School Superintendent for Gore District, 1848, ibid., VIII, p. 268.

ceased to exist in one year." The confusion was aggravated by the fact that his returns showed that 77 new school houses had been built in that year.[23]

The important fact, it would seem, is that Ryerson drew attention to these inaccuracies. Although some discrepancies appear to have slipped past him, others did strike him and he drew attention to them, thereby providing some incentive to his subordinates to present more accurate statistics. The fact that the report of the Gore District Superintendent, referred to above, was included by Hodgins in his collected documents without comment or attempt at refutation, suggests that he, Ryerson's valued assistant in the Education Office, did not feel that the District Superintendent's comments cast doubt as to Ryerson's suitability for his office.

Ryerson's tour after his appointment drew, as we have seen, criticism, particularly from the point of view that it was of little practical value to the new education system. Ryerson's justification for the tour was expressed in his letter of acceptance of the post of Chief Superintendent to the Provincial Secretary. "Believing that mere theorists are not the best practical men", he felt that he should see the work of actual teachers and administrators in other

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23. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1849, ibid., VIII, p. 278.

countries. The journey was, incidentally, to be done "without a farthing's additional expense to the Public", Ryerson meeting expenses himself, facts which the Globe, in particular, found hard to accept.[24]

As will be shown in a later section of this chapter, his intention was not slavishly to impose on Upper Canada methods and systems brought uncritically from abroad. "What may be very desirable, and even essential, in one Country," he declared, "may not answer at all in another Country."[25]

Putman summed up the benefits to the new education system of Upper Canada of Ryerson's American and European tour. Prussia, he said, showed Ryerson the advantages of having trained teachers and a strong central administration; Ireland offered him a simple solution to religious problems and a fine system of textbooks; and from Massachusetts, he learned how an efficient system can be managed by popularly elected trustees.[26]

Ryerson introduced his basic ideas in his Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada and it must be admitted that comparatively little of it was truly original. Nine tenths of it were composed of quotations from reports by Horace Mann and eminent European statesmen

24. Letter, 2 October 1844, ibid., V, p. 114 - 5.

25. Circular to District Municipal Councils, 3 February 1845, ibid., V, p. 264.

26. J. Harold Putman, Egerton Ryerson and Education in Upper Canada, (Toronto, Wm Briggs, 1912), p. 25.

and educators but Ryerson's genius surely lies in the use he made of the ideas of these men, in relation to the needs of the community in Upper Canada.[27]

From a viewpoint set up some 130 years later, it seems reasonable to claim that Ryerson may be known by his works to have been a very successful Chief Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada, but, at the time, it was not easy for the individual teacher or parent to see the direction or even shape of the system that Ryerson was developing. Instructions, reports, comments came out in his name, and changes were known to be instigated by him. He was clearly in control. It was reasonable, then, that his suitability for the post of Chief Superintendent of Education should be a matter of concern. However, as we have seen, most of the adverse criticism on this score was built on weak foundations and even where justified in fact, as in certain statistical errors which have been examined, they would seem hardly such as to render him unsuitable for the post which he held.

2. Ryerson's attempt to centralise control.

Ryerson took office as Chief Superintendent after many years had been spent in Upper Canada in attempting to create some administrative order in the field of education. In spite of objections that he was concerned with self-aggrandisement

27. Ibid., p. 110.

and favoured totalitarian control, Ryerson saw that a firm hand at the helm was the only means by which education might be set on a good course.

In Upper Canada, the Legislature initiated the overall education system but traditionally the actual establishment of schools had been a local matter. From 1808 to 1823, the district public school boards, appointed by the Governor, were autonomous bodies. In 1824, a first move was made towards uniformity, as a General Board of Education was appointed by the Governor to control district grammar and common schools.[28] In 1833, this board was abolished as a result of much dissatisfaction with the élitist views of the Chairman, Dr. John Strachan, and other members of the body, and local autonomy returned. A period of stagnation followed as weightier political issues, the 1837 Rebellion and the Union of Upper and Lower Canada, held attention.

The Education Act of 1841 brought in a centralised administration under the Superintendent of Education for the United Province of Canada.[29] Modifications to this act were made in the Act of 1843, by which the duties of the Superintendent were taken over by the Provincial Secretary, a Minister of the Crown. An Assistant Superintendent was

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28. 4th George IV, Chapter VIII, Section ii.

29. 4th and 5th Victoria, Chapter XVIII, Section iv.

appointed for each of Upper and Lower Canada.[30] This act was not considered successful because it did not provide adequate machinery for enforcement of its provisions.[31]

It was at this point that Egerton Ryerson came publicly on to the scene in the rôle of Chief Superintendent. He it was who designed the Education Act of 1846, giving extensive powers to the Superintendent of Schools. The General Board of Education was re-established but its functions were largely advisory or dependent on the wishes of the Chief Superintendent.

It is interesting to note that one of the men from whom Egerton Ryerson gained inspiration, Henry Barnard, had earlier declared himself against too much central control of public schools: "It is doubtful if the institution attains its highest efficiency and broadest usefulness by this legal uniformity." He felt that too tight control had an inhibiting effect on "the teaching power of the schools."[32] However, throughout his long career, Ryerson worked gradually towards uniformity and complete centralisation.

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30. 7th Victoria, Chapter XXIX, Sections i and ii.

31. Putman, op. cit., p. 123.

32. Henry Barnard, "Educational Development", First Century of National Existence, No place, No publisher, No date, p. 395 quoted in John S. Brubacher, (ed.), Henry Barnard on Education, (New York, Russell and Russell Inc., 1965), p. 118 - 120.

Direct opposition and criticism of Ryerson's methods came from local officials and journalists. A circular from Henry S. Reid, the Warden of Newcastle District Council, to other Wardens and Councillors condemned the "complicated machinery" needed to carry out the provisions of the 1846 Act and complained that the duties of trustees were "too troublesome and intricate" to be performed by the class of people who would usually be trustees. A degree of centralisation in the form of control at District level was to be preferred.[33]

Even after Ryerson had gone to much trouble to publicise and explain his plans in Annual Reports, circulars, articles in the Journal of Education and tours for lectures and public discussions during 1847 and 1853, the Municipal Council of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville still opposed centralisation. They petitioned the Legislature in 1854 to place control of the Common Schools in the United Counties with them. In their opinion, "the Common School affairs of the said United Counties could be as efficiently managed and conducted by the said Council and its Officers and at much less expense, as the mode practised at Toronto by the Chief Superintendent and his Officers." They were not alone in petitioning the Legislature "for certain amendments to the Common School Act," the United Counties of Huron and

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33. Circular, 1847, Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 119.

Bruce, and of York, Ontario and Peel, and the County of Simcoe all presenting petitions at approximately the same time, but Leeds and Grenville went further in urging "a total repeal."[34]

Robert Spence, a political adversary of the Government and editor of the Dundas Warder, claimed that the aim of the Education Acts of 1846 and 1847 was to "wrest the education of the youth of the Country from the people, and to vest it in the hands of the Executive". He declared that District Superintendents, who ought to be responsible for all schools in their area, were treated merely as pay clerks, and condemned the office of Chief Superintendent as "useless and expensive".[35] A correspondent to the same paper would have had much more power vested at a still lower level than that of District Superintendent, feeling that disputes should be resolved by District Councils, or arbitrators appointed by them.[36]

Teachers on the whole, welcomed aspects of uniformity and centralisation, especially as far as textbooks were concerned, but there were exceptions. The Dumfries Teachers' Association declared, "In the internal management of his School [the teacher] should be left to follow the dictates of his own judgment, as it would be unjust to hold him res-

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34. Ibid., XI, p. 108 - 9.

35. Editorial, Dundas Warder, 3 September 1847.

36. Letter, ibid., July 1847, quoted in Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 200.

ponsible for the success of his School, if compelled to teach according to Rules and Regulations furnished by any other authority than his own."[37]

It must be remembered that most teachers, being at that time of very limited pedagogical training, and frequently isolated from others of their kind, would, no doubt, have been only too pleased to be told by an authoritative source what books they should use, and to feel themselves part of a centralised organisation. Those having the initiative to band themselves into an association, would probably have had already a degree of confidence in their work and would have acquired a feeling of strength from joining with others in the same profession. It would seem reasonable, then, that opposition to uniformity and centralisation should come from such a source.

Ryerson was felt by some to be too powerful. The Home District Council objected to the "concentration of too much power upon one individual -- the Chief Superintendent of Schools",[38] and the Globe felt there was insufficient check on his use of power. He had "a carte blanche to contrive and circulate, what he may deem suitable on the subject of education, and to do so with the sanction of the Government."

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37. Hodgins, ibid., IX, p. 64.

38. Home District Council Report on the Common School Act of 1846, ibid., VII, p. 121.

Indeed, it was claimed, the only requirement was that he make an annual report to the Governor-General who was too busy to read it.[39]

Furthermore, the Chief Superintendent was not chosen by the people, objected the critics. He was a nominee of the Governor-in-Council, said Home District Council, and in no way responsible to the people, and, although there existed a General Board of Education, "the power of that Board is placed in abject subordination to the Chief Superintendent of Schools." He could consult them or not "as his inclination, or caprice, may dictate".[40] A correspondent to the Globe felt that school visitors, also, would be merely "Dr Egerton's mouth-pieces" [sic].[41]

Ryerson had gained much inspiration for his system of control from the education system in being in Prussia and it was, perhaps, inevitable that his critics should associate his position of authority with "Prussian Despotism". The Globe maintained, "It is just an expansion of the same principle which has placed the Methodist people in the hands of such a man as Egerton Ryerson, to be used for his own aggrandizement."[42] Ryerson, it claimed, wanted dictatorial powers for himself just as the Prussian government controlled all

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39. Editorial, Globe, 25 April 1849, p. 126.

40. Home District Council Report on the Common School Act of 1846, Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 197.

41. Letter, Globe, 12 December 1846, page number indecipherable.

42. Editorial, Globe, 19 December 1846, page number indecipherable.

aspects of education. It was the Board of Education which should control money and the Normal Schools, and receive reports from District Superintendents.[43] The centralisation of the Prussian system was unsuitable for Canada.[44] The denunciations of Ryerson's "usurpation" of power continued in the Globe over many months during 1846 and 1847. One editorial, condemning a decision made by Ryerson in a dispute over an election of trustees, began, "The ambition of the Superintendent of Education seems to be boundless."[45] Any positive move made by Ryerson was likely to be met by scandalised comments such as that in the Hamilton Spectator, "An unwarranted stretch of power."[46] This remark was directed against Ryerson's scheme to ensure the use of the Irish National Series of textbooks in the schools. More will be said of this matter in a later chapter.

There were demands that control of the education system should be in the hands of a General Board of Education rather than in those of one man. The Globe had earlier chastised Ryerson for supporting the power of the Governor General to rule without the consent of a council chosen by the people[47] and, now that Ryerson was seeking personal rule himself, the

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43. Editorial, Globe, 27 January 1847, p. 30.
44. Editorial, ibid., 30 January 1847, p. 34.
45. Editorial, ibid., 10 April 1847, p. 114.
46. Quoted in ibid., 6 February 1847, p. 43.
47. Editorial, ibid., 11 June 1844, page number indecipherable. (p. 2?)

Globe campaigned in favour of the Board of Education. "Let the powers now in the general Superintendent be conferred upon a competent Board of Education", selected because of their interest in education and their status in the community.[48]

There was a short moment of triumph for Ryerson's enemies when the abortive Cameron Act of 1849 removed the office of Chief Superintendent and placed much of the authority with local boards, under the General Board of Education. Their delight was short lived for the Act was repealed before its measures were due to take effect.

A regular basis for attacks on Ryerson was the way in which he was appointed to the post of Chief Superintendent. There is no doubt that certain measures were taken to make possible Ryerson's appointment and, before considering the comments of his critics and opponents, it would be apposite to make a brief review of the events.

In 1841, educational affairs were placed under the jurisdiction of a Superintendent of Education for the United Province of Canada who was, in fact, the Provincial Secretary, and in 1842, two Assistant Superintendents of Education were appointed, Jean-Baptiste Meilleur for Lower Canada and the Reverend Robert Murray for Upper Canada.[49] Two years later,

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48. Editorial, ibid., 3 February 1847, p. 38.

49. Hodgins, op. cit., IV, p. 212.

by which time Ryerson had made known to many members of the Government his views on the education system, Daly, the Provincial Secretary wrote to Ryerson, offering him the post of Assistant Superintendent of Education, giving as his reasons, "the passing of the late School Act, 7th Victoria, Chapter 29, having made considerable alterations in the Common School System for Canada West, and the appointment of the Reverend Robert Murray to a Professorship in King's College, having rendered it necessary for His Excellency to name a successor to him in his Office of Assistant Superintendent of Education".[50]

According to Sir Francis Hincks,[51] Murray felt "the anomalousness of his position, and his inability to establish a system of Public School Education", but the Honourable Isaac Buchanan saw the situation differently. "I was one of the first to see the necessity of our getting Doctor Ryerson to take hold of our Educational System, and I shared the somewhat delicate duty of getting our esteemed friend, the Reverend Robert Murray (whom we had got appointed Assistant Superintendent of Education), to accept a Professorship at the Toronto University, when the Reverend Doctor Ryerson succeeded to the vacant post in 1844."[52] J.M. Higginson, the Private Secretary to Sir Charles Metcalfe wrote in April

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50. Letter, 28 September 1844, ibid., V. p. 113 - 4.

51. Sir Francis Hincks, "Reminiscences of his Public Life", J. George Hodgins, (ed.), Historical Educational Papers and Documents of Ontario, Vols I-VI, (Toronto, King's Printer, 1911), Vol. I, p. 159.

52. Letter to J. George Hodgins, 24 March 1883, ibid., I, p. 159.

1844 that he believed "an arrangement would have been practicable" a little earlier to secure Ryerson's valuable services,[53] and Sir Charles himself wrote to Lord Stanley, the Colonial Secretary, "There is a prospect of my being able to fill the Chair about to be vacated . . . with additional benefit to the public interests."[54]

The appointment of Murray as Professor of Mathematics at King's College speedily earned the scorn of the Globe, in which the writer of an editorial referred to the move as "an act of the most gross political jobbery ever brought before the country".[55] Three years later, that paper was still attacking on the same lines. It alleged that Ryerson was politically influenced, and reiterated the charge that he had reached his office by trickery. "Was he not in league with that party which would retain the Province in vassalage to the old Compact, which he had so heartily denounced in former times?"[56]

To support this view, George Brown published extracts from a number of local newspapers in Upper Canada.[57] The Dundas Warden, the Hamilton Journal and Express, the Coburg Courier and the Belleville Chronicle all demanded the dis-

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53. Letter, 10 April 1884, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., V, p. 109.
54. Letter, 8 June 1844, ibid., V, p. 113.
55. Editorial, Globe, 11 February 1845, p. 22.
56. Editorial, ibid., 29 April 1848, p. 138.
57. Ibid., 20 May 1848, p. 161.

missal of Ryerson because his appointment was said to be a political reward. The Chronicle was surprised that someone appointed under a Tory administration should continue in office during a Reform administration. Neither George Brown nor the editor of the Chronicle would seem to have realised that the fact that Ryerson had not been dismissed after a change of administration suggested that his appointment may have been due to other than purely political motives.

The Courier added a further objection that Ryerson was "the avowed minister of a certain religious sect" and so should not head an education department. Four years earlier, as we have seen, the Globe had published a statement written by officials of the Methodist Church, of which Ryerson was himself a member. It was directed to members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada. The Church officials had stated their opposition to Ryerson's being offered the post of Assistant Superintendent of Education because they feared "that, for various reasons, under present circumstances, it would in all probability identify the connexion with a political party".[58] The statement is couched in such hesitant terms that one wonders how strong were the fears in actual fact.

There is no doubt of the accuracy of many of the facts on which criticism of Ryerson's centralisation of control

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58. Statement, 5 July 1844, ibid., 16 July 1844, page number indecipherable.

was based. He had chosen his way and it seems clear that little would turn him from it. What is suspect is the interpretation of his actions, particularly in regard to charges of personal aggrandisement or of a leaning towards totalitarianism.

Immediately on being appointed Superintendent of Education, Ryerson sought and received permission to spend the year 1844 to 1845 in extensive travel in Europe and the United States, where he studied already established education systems. From Prussia he was able to learn the advantages of centralised administration and in Horace Mann and Henry Barnard among others, he found models of men who had established and controlled successful education systems largely by their own efforts. Ryerson also learned from Massachusetts that efficient local management can be added to central control by means of elected trustees.[59]

Towards the end of his term of office, Ryerson was at the head of an Education Department whose main personnel were himself, as Chief Superintendent, a Deputy Superintendent, a Senior Clerk and Accountant, three subordinate clerks, a messenger, a Grammar School Inspector and 296 local superintendents of common schools. The Chief Superintendent reported to the Government and Legislature through the

59. Putman, op.cit., p. 25.

Provincial Secretary, who was a member of the Cabinet and was responsible also to the Council of Public Instruction as the former General Board of Education was by then known. In spite of its having the power to make such recommendations and decisions it felt expedient, the Council was, in fact, merely an advisory body, its work being done by the Chief Superintendent.[60]

Ryerson preferred things this way on grounds of efficiency. In discussing the attempt of the Cameron Act to make the Chief Superintendent subordinate to a Provincial Board of Education, Ryerson pointed out that everything would be slowed down. Furthermore, a board cannot be fully responsible for decisions and actions as an individual can. As Ryerson put it, "An unsalaried Board is not a responsible Body . . . a salaried Superintendent is responsible."[61]

Ryerson denied that he was hungry for power: in a letter to Daly he wrote, "I have desired to retain no more power in the hands of the Superintendent than is absolutely necessary to enable the Government to control the general principles and character of the system of public instruction."[62]

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60. Robin S. Harris, Quiet Evolution. A Study of the Educational System of Ontario, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 105.

61. Letter to Robert Baldwin, Attorney-General, 14 July 1849, Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 239.

62. Letter to the Honourable Dominick Daly, Provincial Secretary, accompanying Draft of Education Bill, 3 March 1846, Journal of Education, (February 1848), p. 44.

Ryerson's attitude was that, if the Government has the duty of legislating on public education, it must see that its laws are executed. He wrote of some governments which had made laws and then neglected them, with the result that education schemes had failed in those countries. He blamed such failure on the fact that execution of the laws was often left to the whim of local officials. Success came only from an organised system controlled from the top.[63] He felt, however, that he was controlling on behalf of the Government, which, in turn, was "merely the instrument to accomplish the end for which society exists."[64] His office must fulfil a function: "If the Office cannot present satisfactory proof of its utility and importance, its continued existence will never be advocated by me."[65]

The duties of the Chief Superintendent had been laid down in the Education Act of 1841[66] and, in a letter to T.W.C. Murdoch, Private Secretary to Sir Charles Bagot,[67] Ryerson made suggestions which found their way into expanded duties set out in the Education Act of 1846.[68] The Chief

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63. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, Hodgins, op. cit., VI, p. 205.

64. Egerton Ryerson, Lecture, "The Social Advancement of Canada", The Mechanics' Institute at Niagara and Toronto, October 1849, Journal of Education, (December 1849), p. 177.

65. Letter, Globe, 9 December 1848, p. 394.

66. 4th and 5th Victoria, Chapter XVIII, Section iv.

67. Letter, 14 January 1842, ibid., V, p. 106.

68. 9th Victoria, Chapter XX, Section ii.

Superintendent was to apportion money from the Common School Fund and set ratios; he would decide on complaints submitted to him; he would discourage the use of unsuitable and improper books and recommend uniform and approved textbooks; he would superintend the Normal School when it was established; he would prepare and recommend plans of School Houses and furniture; he would establish School Libraries; he would "collect and diffuse information on the subject of Education generally, among the people of Upper Canada", and he would make an Annual Report.

In order to carry out these duties, Ryerson felt that the School Law should be applied simply and easily.[69] If, in practice, the School Law was found to contain faults or impracticabilities, they should be analysed and put right.[70]

When Ryerson took office, he was faced with a very disorganised system, including many officials with little idea of their duties and responsibilties. He claimed that often Township School Superintendents were volunteers who "considered themselves entitled to gratitude for the little that they did, rather than liable to blame for the much that they did not."[71] Trustees exerted their power to see that

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69. Journal of Education, (January 1850), p. 2.

70. Circular to District Municipal Councils, 3 February 1845, Hodgins, op. cit., V, p. 263.

71. Explanatory notes to Draft Common School Bill, February 1849, ibid., VIII, p. 215.

arrangements for schools were for their own convenience rather than for the majority of the inhabitants of the settlement.[72] The Superintendent of Common Schools for Etobicoke wrote of a school section where "differences respecting the School-house, are withholding from the inhabitants the means of education".[73]

The attitude of local officials presented a continuous problem and even after Ryerson had spent years in sending out circulars of advice and instruction and had made personal tours, he remarked, in his Annual Report for 1854, a decrease in both the number of public lectures and the number of school visits by Local Superintendents.[74] A total of 7,055 visits had been reported in 1853, but only 6,866 in 1854. The number of lectures given had decreased by 49.

Yet, Ryerson sought to make local officials responsible for education in their area. He required that they report to him and he laid down the lines of policy that they should follow, but it does not seem that he was the "Prussian Despot" depicted by his critics. The Act of 1847 empowered Boards of Trustees or Town Boards of Education to take possession of Common School property, to determine

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72. J. George Hodgins, Schools and Colleges in Ontario 1792 - 1910, Vols I-III, (Toronto, King's Printer, 1910), Vol II, p. 98.

73. Report of Superintendent of Common Schools for Etobicoke, Journal of Education, (May 1850), p. 78.

74. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1854, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., XI, p. 217 - 227.

sites and descriptions of schools, to appoint teachers, and to appoint a Superintendent of Common Schools if in a city or town. They might also determine conditions of admission, subjects of instruction and general regulations for the schools in their care. Municipal authorities had the power to decide on and administer the necessary school taxes.[75]

The intention was that, as local officials became more experienced, they should have greater authority. By the Act of 1846, Municipal Councils were restricted to imposing school taxes "within the limits of their powers of imposing taxes". Ryerson wanted this limiting clause removed in the Act of 1847[76] and, in drafting the School Bill of 1849, Ryerson sought to extend to trustees in cities and towns the power to impose and collect Rate Bills on the basis of each child attending school that was already held by those in rural districts.[77] All the same, Ryerson intended to supervise the activities of local officials, for, according to the Education Act of 1850, annual school reports were to include "a full and detailed account of the receipts and expenditures of all school moneys received and expended".[78]

On the other hand, Ryerson sought progressive centrali-

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75. 10th and 11th Victoria, Chapter XIX, Sections iv and v.

76. Covering letter to draft Bill 1847, Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 190.

77. Proposed School Bill, 1849, ibid., VIII, p. 87.

78. Ibid., IX, p. 64.

sation of control of teachers' qualifications. By the Act of 1846, he took the power of examining teachers from the lay local superintendents and gave it to the professional District Superintendents, whom he could supervise through the annual report they were required to make to him. In his Report of 1847, Ryerson urged, as a measure towards uniformity and elevation of the standard of teaching, that certification and examination of teachers should be by a local Board of Examiners set up by District Councils.[79] He reiterated the need for a uniform and efficient system of examining and classifying teachers in his explanatory remarks accompanying the Draft Education Bill of 1849. He preferred that the granting of Provincial Certificates of Qualification as Teachers should be done by the Chief Superintendent and Masters of the Normal School.[80]

Ryerson felt that he must have overall controlling power for reasons of stability, uniformity and efficiency He refuted charges that he sought to be a dictator. "Education was never yet promoted by harsh means."[81] An attempt to force even the best methods would arouse hostility and prejudice: public opinion must be prepared for all measures.[82]

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79. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 155.

80. Ibid., VIII, pp. 90, 91, 214.

81. Circular to District Superintendents, December 1846, ibid., VI, p. 268.

82. Explanatory Remarks concerning proposed School Bill of 1849. ibid., VIII, p. 88.

He insisted that the Upper Canada system was "the reverse" of a despotic system, but warned that, in a state of civilisation and free government, the individual will must be subordinated in civil matters to the will of constituencies. The General Rules and Regulations were "but guards against individual or local abuses".[83] Minorities, however, must be protected and it is "the supremacy of law" which does this in a free society.[84]

Ryerson took considerable care to see that all measures were legal, addressing, from time to time, questions to the Solicitor-General for his expert opinion.[85] He was careful, also, to phrase his circulars to Councils, Superintendents, Teachers, as "recommendations" or "suggestions". One such circular contained the remark: "Sir, I have made the foregoing observations and suggestions with no view to dictate."[86]

Indeed, Ryerson maintained that he wanted change to come by the will of the people. "I have not desired other than its voluntary introduction in any District, City or Town," he said, regarding the introduction of a free school system.[87]

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83. Editorial, Journal of Education, (January 1848), p. 2 - 3.

84. Ibid., (December 1849), p. 180.

85. See, for example, Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 203.

86. Circular to Heads of City and Town Corporations, 15 January 1848, Journal of Education, (January 1848), p. 21.

87. Explanatory remarks concerning the proposed School Bill, 1849, Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 87.

There could, therefore, be no haste. He was prepared to devote years, "perhaps . . . an age" to carrying out his plan.[88]

Ryerson denied the charge that his appointment was a political one and expressed pleasure on occasion that measures had been passed in a non-partisan way. Regarding the Act of 1850, he wrote, "Party measures were not permitted to mar this great measure for the education of the people; men of all parties united in the support of its general principles."[89] The British Colonist had declared in 1844, "Mr Ryerson is no party man; he cares not for party, or what party rules, -- but for the great principles and vital spirit of our Government."[90] Ryerson claimed that, although he would have liked the Chief Superintendency in 1842, he was not appointed because he put Methodism before party principles. "Making appointments upon the principle of party, they must be given only to one of the party," he wrote. He admitted that his non-appointment was also connected with the untimely death of Lord Sydenham, who was in sympathy with Ryerson's views.[91]

When serious consideration was being given to his appointment in 1844, Ryerson insisted in a letter to the Honourable W.H. Merritt that it should have popular approval

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88. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, ibid., VI, p. 211.

89. Circular to Wardens of Counties, 31 July 1850, ibid., IX, p. 202.

90. Editorial, The British Colonist, Toronto, 4 June 1844, no page number.

91. Egerton Ryerson, The Story of My Life, (ed. J. George Hodgins), (Toronto, E. Briggs, 1883), p. 345 - 6.

irrespective of sect or party.[92] Ryerson wanted it to be clear that his appointment was an act of the Governor General rather than one politically inspired and wrote to Sir Charles Metcalfe, "In order to divest my appointment of the appearance of the political character, which is attached to the Office of Secretary of the Province, it might be stated in the Commission, in connection with my name, that my duties were to be confined to the Office of Chief Superintendent of Common Schools, as required in the Common School Act of 1843. My office would then be one recognized by law. . . . I would not be superceding another, (who might retain His situation, at least for a short time)."[93]

The Governor General would not agree to a joint commission and in October 1844, the Canada Gazette contained the bald statement, "His Excellency the Governor General has been pleased to appoint:- The Reverend Egerton Ryerson, D.D., to be Assistant Superintendent of Education for that part of the Province formerly Upper Canada, in place of the Reverend Robert Murray. . ."[94]

Even so, it is apparent that a degree of manoeuvre took place to enable Ryerson to be appointed Chief Superin-

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92. Letter, June 1844, Hodgins, Hist. Docs., I, p. 158.

93. Letter, 26 February 1844, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., V, p. 107.

94. Announcement, 18 October 1844, Canada Gazette, (October 1844) ibid., V, p. 116.

tendent. In view of his undoubted success in the post, it is perhaps futile to question too closely the way in which he arrived there but whatever the full truth of the situation, Ryerson himself insisted that his appointment was in no way politically inspired. He had never discussed his views on education with anyone in the Government, "having no need of Office, and never having asked a personal favour of any Government in my life."[95]

It seems clear that Ryerson wanted personally to watch over all aspects of the education system. He felt such action necessary to ensure uniformity and efficiency, and he had learnt from his observation of the Prussian system that uniformity and efficiency came most satisfactorily from centralised control; but his "Prussianism" surely did not extend as far as was suggested by the interpretation given to that term by the more extreme of his critics.

Criticism on this matter tended to be either totally negative, condemning utterly any form of centralisation, or constructive only in the sense that it urged less centralisation. In either case, Ryerson could not accept the point of view of his critics since he considered that full personal control was the only satisfactory way to establish a sound system of education.

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95. Egerton Ryerson, "Letter of Explanation in regard to his Appointment," December 1858, ibid., V, p. 116 - 8.

3. Foreign influence in Ryerson's policies.

"Prussianism" was a term used particularly by the Globe to condemn an authoritative kind of foreign influence supposedly found in Ryerson's policies. Prussia was not the only foreign source and his critics found ammunition in this fact also.

Ryerson was appointed Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada on 28th September 1844. On 2nd October 1844, he formally applied for leave of absence in order to visit the United States and Europe. Leave was granted on 11th October and he left Canada on 31st October 1844. He was absent for a year. It had been agreed before his appointment that he should make this tour in order to gain at first hand knowledge and experience of existing systems of education. J.M. Higginson, Private Secretary to Sir Charles Metcalfe, had written to Ryerson a few weeks previously, "I do not foresee any objection to your being charged with instructions to enquire into and report on educational matters, for the information of the Provincial Government."[96]

In view of this beginning, it is not surprising that there should have been influence from foreign parts in the design of the education system he established in Upper Canada. Ryerson sought only to use the most suitable of foreign

96. Letter, 18 September 1844, ibid., V, p. 111.

influences, but unfortunately, perhaps, he was unnecessarily free in his references to them. He, therefore, encouraged criticism that his system of education was inappropriate to the specific needs of Upper Canada.

His great statement on an education system, made in 1846,[97] consists to a great extent of quotations from writers in the United States and Europe. When speaking at the opening of the Normal School, on 1st November, 1847, Ryerson began with a pedantic definition of the word "normal" and a description of its use in reference to schools in Switzerland, France, England and America.[98] Indeed, whenever he sought to justify some course of action, it was Ryerson's practice to refer to a variety of foreign sources where the step had been successfully taken or where other writers gave ample justification.

George Brown, in the Globe, attacked "Dr Ryerson's Report" of 1846 as being inconsistent in "reporting upon the Prussian School system, adopting the Irish School books, and recommending the New York law".[99] Later, the same editor attacked Ryerson's recommendations that measures working in the United States should be adopted in Canada. "Why not," he said, "appeal to the merits of the measures themselves,

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97. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846.

98. Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 97.

99. Editorial, Globe, 20 January 1847, p. 18.

and not servilely copy from others?"[100] Mention has already been made of the recurring refrain in Globe attacks on the subject of Ryerson's "Prussianism".

The Globe, itself, was not averse to using comparison with aspects of foreign systems when its own cause could be furthered. While, this time, objecting to Ryerson's imposing his own ideas, the writer contrasted Ryerson's moves on his appointment with those of Horace Mann in Massachusetts, since he considered the situation there and in Upper Canada similar "in many respects". Mann did not "immediately scamper off to Prussia, &c., &c, on a wild goose chase for eighteen months." The editor then listed a number of actions taken by Mann -- most of which Ryerson was to do within the next year or so -- and went on to compare Mann's report of "300 closely printed pages" with Ryerson's 48 pages, "of which more than one half was written by other people, and which altogether is about as well suited to Canada as it is to Kamschatka."[101]

Another occasion when such comparison suited the Globe's case was in its opposition to free schools. If a system of free schools caused more pupils to turn up, classes would be larger. "Does he [Ryerson] expect to grind eight times the labour out of his teachers that the Americans get out of theirs?" demanded the editor. This, it may be noted,

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100. Editorial, ibid., 26 February 1848, p. 66.
101. Editorial, Globe, 6 January 1847, p. 6.

was in the same editorial which condemned Ryerson for "Prussian" attitudes.[102] Indeed, on one occasion, the Globe turned itself about and saw fit to castigate Ryerson for not learning from other countries. In an editorial attack on "Mr Ryerson's Report on Education",[103] the Globe declared that Ryerson should have given consideration to "wise school laws" in other countries. Ryerson, it claimed, only considered other countries when their attitudes were similar to those of Prussia.[104]

There was one form of foreign influence to which Ryerson himself objected. This was the influence from South of the border brought by itinerant teachers from America and textbooks published in the United States. Their influence, Ryerson believed was pernicious since it tended to undermine the British Canadian way of life. Indeed, he went so far, in a letter to the Reverend W.H. Landon, as to claim that American textbooks contained "downright imputations" against the Canadian form of government.[105] Ironically, when Ryerson proposed prohibiting the use of foreign books, there were outcries from people objecting to the necessity of paying more money for different books.[106] Ryerson aimed also to remove foreign teachers and believed he had the support of

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102. Editorial, ibid., 10 May 1848, p. 150.

103. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846.

104. Editorial, Globe, 13 January 1847, p. 2.

105. Letter, 1 February 1847, Hodgins, op. cit., VI, p. 284.

106. Letter from Dexter D'Everado, Superintendent of Niagara District to Ryerson, 19 October 1846, ibid., VI, p. 282.

the people regarding his aim to restrict legal Certificates of Qualification to natural-born or naturalised British subjects. Public sentiment, he felt, was "in favour of having the youth of the Country taught by our own fellow subjects".[107]

It is interesting that, in the 1970s, there has arisen once more in Canada a strong lobby to remove from Canadian education American influences in the form of text-books and university professors. The Province of Quebec has made Canadian citizenship a qualification for the granting of a teaching certificate.

Ryerson acknowledged that he was influenced by foreign education systems, but only in so far as the influence was applicable to the Upper Canadian situation. Stressing this proviso, he admitted in a letter to the Honourable Dominick Daly, Provincial Secretary that the School Act of 1846 was "the result of my observations in Europe" but he insisted that while travelling and studying other systems,"I have not lost sight of the peculiarities of our own Country, and have only imitated distinguished examples of other nations." Even Prussia had sought information from elsewhere: "France, England and other European Governments have done the same."[108]

Criticism of Ryerson's tour in Europe and America was

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107. Egerton Ryerson, "Special Report", ibid., VII, p. 111.

108. Letter to the Provincial Secretary, 27 March 1847, ibid., VI, p. 139.

met by his alter ego, J. George Hodgins and by Ryerson himself, both, incidentally, using comparison with the situation in a foreign power to do it. Hodgins recalled that Horace Mann, when Secretary to the State Board of Education of Massachusetts, had made a visit to Europe in 1843 to study popular education. "His reasons for making that tour of observation were in effect those which had influenced Doctor Ryerson to visit Europe, with a similar object in view."[109] Ryerson referred to an "enlightened Educationist" from the United States who spent "upwards of two years" in Europe. "I have employed scarcely half that time," he wrote to Daly, "in the prosecution of my enquiries; and without having imposed one farthing's expense upon the public."[110] He had, in fact, met the cost himself.

To charges of Prussianism, Ryerson retorted, "I have desired nothing Prussian in the Canadian School System, but the method of teaching the elementary branches of Education adopted by the German School Masters generally." The provisions of the School Act for Cities and Towns were "a literal transcript of the School Acts for the principal Cities and Towns in the State of New York.[111] Furthermore, he claimed that the main features of the Upper Canadian system as organised by him were not from Prussia but from Massachusetts,

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109. Ibid., VI, introduction, p. iv.

110. Letter to the Hon. Dominick Daly, Provincial Secretary, 27 March 1847, loc. cit.

111. Letter, 8 May 1848, Globe, 10 May 1848, p. 150.

where an education system had been established 150 years before the establishment of the Prussian school system.[112]

There is no doubt that Ryerson was greatly influenced by foreign sources in the planning of his system of education, but a criticism that was, it would seem, unjustly made was that he was simply imposing foreign systems on Upper Canada either without consideration for local needs or for some sinister political or social purpose. He denied this and maintained that he chose only those parts of foreign systems which would be beneficial to the Upper Canadian situation. In view of this, there would seem little reason for him to heed his critics on this matter.

4. Communication.

It is a frequent cry in the late twentieth century that, in spite of the resources now available, policies are not clearly communicated through the various levels of any system and Ryerson too, was faced with the problem of communicating satisfactorily his aims and requirements.

He was aware that there would be many difficulties of administration and communication until he had succeeded in establishing a firm, continuous system of education. "Frequent changes in a school law," he wrote in 1849, ". . . impede,

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112. Letter, ibid., 9 December 1848, p. 394.

rather than promote, the work of education, . . . distract public attention, and discourage individual exertion."[113] This view was supported by Thomas Higginson, the Superintendent of Ottawa District, "Public opinion has no time to mature on any system, until another is advocated." Education acts came so frequently at first that there was no time for people to correct abuses by means of experience, and the resulting bewilderment led, in his opinion, to indifference.[114] The Superintendent of the Western District, George Duck, Junior, felt that there should not be too much haste to change the existing system. "Much of the blame, which attends the working of the present School system, arises in great measure from the apathy of those on whom it is intended to act", and this he attributed to the confusion caused by rapidly succeeding acts.[115]

In an age of rapid and nearly instantaneous communication, it is not easy to appreciate the confusion that could result from irregularly delayed information and instructions. While one modification could arrive a long time after the original instruction, another but slightly delayed could arrive very quickly after the receipt of the original. A neighbouring district could experience quite different timing, and confusion could result. It would, from this point of

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113. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1849, Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 272.

114. Report of the Ottawa District Superintendent, 1848, ibid., VIII, p. 97.

115. Report of the Superintendent of the Western District, 1848, ibid., VIII, p. 102.

view, have been desirable to make changes as infrequently as possible, but there was much to change, and some of the moves Ryerson contemplated were far-reaching and had to be approached by stages.

Further, an efficient, unified scheme demanded highly organised administrative machinery and many local officials were overawed by the demands made on them. While Hodgins considered the Act of 1846 to be "simplicity itself" and to deal only with elementary principles, he reported that others condemned it as cumbersome, intricate and arbitrary.[116] This latter view was also held by Robert Spence, editor of the Dundas Warder. In one of several extracts from his paper, given by Hodgins, he described the act as "a monstrous absurdity, -- complex, expensive and almost impracticable".[117] This was obviously a popularly-held view, for Hodgins describes Spence as "a representative man of the times", particularly with regard to "so important a social question, as the education of the people."

Gore District Council opposed the centralising features of the 1846 Act and maintained that if all control were placed in the Districts, £6,000 would be saved and there would remain "a School Act, simple in its provisions, cheap in its management, and well understood in its operations",

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116. Ibid., VII, p. 198.

117. Dundas Warder, 22 September 1848, ibid., VII, p. 198.

the inference being that the act was none of these things as it stood.[118]

We have already seen that Henry S. Reid, Warden of Newcastle District Council, considered that "complicated machinery" was needed to carry out the provisions of the 1846 Act and that the duties of trustees were "troublesome and intricate".[119]

Not only were the duties of officials felt to be intellectually beyond the capacity of some but also some duties were very demanding physically. It happened that District Superintendents were required to travel as much as sixty miles over very difficult roads in order to visit a school in their charge. Home District Council pointed out this fact and commented that the duties of a District Superintendent in the larger districts would be "so onerous, as to render it entirely out of the power of any one such Officer properly to discharge them all."[120]

It would seem that, as the administrative system developed, the work of local administrative officers did, indeed, become arduous. As early as 1852, Thomas Benson, Superintendent of Schools in the County of Peterborough,

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118. Gore District Council Memorial to the Legislature concerning the Common School Act of 1846, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 115 - 6.

119. Circular to Wardens and Councillors in Upper Canada, ibid., VII, p. 119.

120. Home District Council Report on the Common School Act, 1846, ibid., VII, p. 121.

resigned and in his letter of resignation, he referred to his having received in one year, six hundred communications and having dispatched nearly five hundred. In order to complete only one visit to each school section in the county, he had to cover a distance which would "appear totally incredible", over roads in very poor condition.[121]

Ryerson did seem aware of these criticisms and sought to improve the situation. Obviously, senior local officials could not be the only line of communication out to the schools, and Ryerson hoped at first to keep teachers within the network by means of official School Visitors, who, in theory, should have ensured that each school was frequently and regularly visited. The clergy, councillors and magistrates were empowered to supplement the Superintendents in this respect.

There is some confusion about the actual state of school visits by Official Visitors. Ryerson, in a letter written in 1849, to the Hon. Robert Baldwin, seemed content due to "the visits of Clergy alone during the last year being an average of more than five visits for each Clergyman in Upper Canada",[122] yet the Trustees of Union School Section Number One in the Township of Downie expressed the situation

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121. Letter, Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, I, p. 102.

122. Letter, 14 July 1849, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., VIII, p. 237.

most succinctly in their report for the year ending 31st December, 1848: "Visits by District Superintendent, one; Clergymen, none; District Councillors, none; total visits, one."[123]

A correspondent to the Globe, signing himself "Grapple", wrote a letter in 1848 headed "Why does the School Bill cause such Universal Discontent?" One of his complaints was that there were "too many overseers", consisting of the regular Trustees and Superintendents, together with "a nondescript class of School Visitors". This heterogeneous force, he claimed, could impede progress because they could prevent the use of new methods by sheer force of numbers.[124]

A few years later, while commenting on matters discussed at the County School Conventions of 1853, the Reverend W.H. Landon wrote to Ryerson, saying that the Clergy were the best fitted for the task of visiting schools, but he had doubts about their real value. "Few even of them, however devoted, have paid much particular attention to the subject of Elementary Instruction, and fewer still have had any experience in actual teaching." Even his fellow local superintendents did not meet with his favour from a professional point of view. "Very few of them . . . are themselves

123. Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, I, p. 182.

124. Letter, Globe, 13 September 1848, p. 294.

educated beyond the mere elements of learning."[125]

The magistracy, too, were felt by an unnamed correspondent to the Globe to be unsuited for the duty of School Visitor. "It is nothing to the discredit of the magistracy, for example, to say that two-thirds of them, are not capable of examining a teacher upon grammar, and perhaps not much more so, in regard to geography and vulgar and decimal arithmetic." Many were "advanced in life" and so held antiquated views on education.[126]

There is an engaging, though not entirely praiseworthy, candour about the attitude of the Home District Council on the question of school visitors, as expressed in their report on the Common School Act of 1846. "The Boards of Visitors in the Home District, feeling convinced that the Schools will be managed quite as well without their interference, have not generally exercised their privileges, and have left the Schools to take care of themselves."[127]

Whatever their qualifications, School Visitors could maintain some degree of communication between the various levels of administration and the schools. Data taken from reports to Boards of Trustees seem to indicate that there was a wide variation in the frequency of visits. The

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125. Letter, date unknown, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., XI, p. 59 - 60.

126. Letter, Globe, 12 December 1846, page number indecipherable.

127. Ibid., VII, p. 121.

Journal of Education for February 1850 published tables of statistics showing, for example, that the City of Kingston had 10 schools and, in the year 1849, 146 School Visits were made by the Superintendent, 67 by clergy and 21 by councillors. Each school could, therefore, have been visited every 2.2 weeks. Brock District had 136 schools and 120 visits were made by the Superintendent, 78 by clergy, 44 by councillors and 48 by magistrates. Here, each school could have been visited only once every 24.4 weeks. The Town of Brantford had only two schools and reported two visits by the Superintendent, one by a clergyman, three by councillors and one by a magistrate. The frequency, here, could have been once in 14.8 weeks.[128] The Reverend John Climie, School Superintendent for the Township of Darlington claimed in 1849 that no school in his area had been visited by anyone lawfully appointed during a period of six years, previous to his embarking on visits.[129]

Even when visits were made, it would seem that some performed little useful service. William B. Richards, speaking in the Legislature of Canada, complained of "officers, who made their School Visits a winter pleasure-trip; stopping their Horse for a few minutes at a School Room Door, and just asking as many questions of the Teacher as would suffice

128. Journal of Education, (February 1850), p. 27 - 8.
129. Hodgins, op. cit., IX, p. 59.

to give them a general knowledge of the state of affairs."[130]

Many of the criticisms of School Visitors and their work are of weaknesses in a system rather than of Ryerson himself. The system was his, however, and he sought to use the School Visitors as a line of communication. It would seem just, then, to hold him responsible for the success or otherwise of the method.

When teachers were largely untrained and frequently isolated, even irregular visits by someone in authority, showing a genuine interest and perhaps offering useful suggestions, would have been of considerable practical and spiritual value. No doubt many visits were of this kind but there seems evidence to suggest that for the most part, school visits were of but limited value. Ryerson seems to have been little concerned with the comments and criticisms on this subject, though it may reasonably be assumed that he felt that the realisation of his aim to produce a well-trained teaching force would greatly reduce the need for School Visitors of the kind we have considered.

Ryerson knew, then, that he could not place too much reliance at first on subordinates. Many lacked the intellect or experience to understand the administrative tasks

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130. Speech, Legislature of Canada, 8 July 1850, ibid., IX, p. 15.

he required of them, many were incapable of carrying out or unwilling to carry out the supervisory or communicative duties he assigned to them. They and the public in general were very ignorant of matters concerning education and Ryerson knew that an essential task for him was to inform and educate the populace, administrators and teachers, and that this was a task he had to begin himself. "From the office of the Chief Superintendent, down to the desk of the humblest Teacher," he wrote in the Journal of Education, "a moral influence, an energy, a vitality should be sent forth in behalf of the education of youth and the diffusion of useful knowledge among the people."[131]

Having been a circuit-rider for Methodism, Ryerson became a missionary for education. He sent carefully-worded circulars to Municipal Councils, District Superintendents, school trustees and teachers. He established, at his own expense, the Journal of Education, in which he published facts and articles about education. He did a ten-week tour in 1847 of the 21 school districts of Upper Canada. He arranged two-day District Educational Conventions which were open to the general public as well as to teachers and administrators. By means of frank discussion, he broke down prejudice and removed misconceptions. He gave public lectures on "The Importance of Education to an Agricultural People".

131. Journal of Education, (August 1850), p. 119.

He, himself, worked tirelessly and efficiently to forward his aims.[132]

Before his appointment as Chief Superintendent, Ryerson wrote of the opportunities which would be available to the incumbent due to the "not onerous duties of [the] office". In view of the volume of paper work he was to produce, in addition to visits and speeches, one feels that his assessment was, perhaps, a little naive. However, he believed that the post "would also afford him leisure to prepare publications, calculated to teach the people at large to appreciate upon high moral and social considerations the Institutions established amongst them."[133] Looking back over his work, in 1867, Ryerson commented, "I have sought to introduce as much as possible, exposition on the principles, spirit and philosophy of government in my annual reports, and other school addresses and documents."[134]

It is uncertain whether Ryerson ever considered the difficulty many of the middle and lower echelons of the administrative system may have had in reading his circulars. Although George Brown's attacks on Ryerson's style were more of a personal than a literary nature, it is true that, even for his time, Ryerson's style was quite complex and pedantic. For-

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132. Putman, op. cit., p. 142 - 3.

133. Letter to T.W.C. Murdoch, Private Secretary to Sir Charles Bagot, 14 January 1842, Hodgins, Hist. Docs., I, p. 156 and Hodgins, Doc. Hist., V, p. 106.

134. Egerton Ryerson, Pamphlet, The New Canadian Dominion: Dangers and Duties of the People in regard to their Government, 1867, Ryerson, Story of My Life, p. 550.

tunately, perhaps, he did realise that he must step carefully and thoroughly prepare the ground before each change.

While introducing the proposed School Bill of 1849, Ryerson pointed out that the cause of the Common School System would be furthered by careful formation of public opinion so that when electors elected trustees who would carry out their wishes, they were thereby electing such as would carry out Ryerson's wishes. On the other hand, Ryerson pointed out, "if you attempt to force, even the best method upon any School division, you excite prejudice and rouse resistance against it, and do more harm than good."[135]

Ryerson's service as a teacher had made him realise also that one statement of intention was not enough. While he was in Europe in 1845, he wrote to the Reverend Alexander Macnab, who was Acting Superintendent of Education in his absence, that the system had to be "explained and spread out" before the people "and, in many cases, again and again." He was aware that the task might take several years.[136] "Anything new -- however simple -- is difficult," said Ryerson in his first editorial in the Journal of Education.[137]

The best way of communicating with people is face to face. The Globe had commented in February 1847, that the people were insufficiently interested in education and someone

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135. Hodgins, Doc. Hist., VIII, p. 88.

136. Letter, 31 March 1845, ibid., VI, p. 226.

137. Editorial, Journal of Education, (January 1848), p. 3. (Ryerson's italics)

ought to go and talk to them;[138] and in July 1847, Ryerson asked permission to tour various counties in Upper Canada to meet local Superintendents, Clergy and Councillors. His aim was to spend a day or two in each district "in explaining every part of the School Law, and in considering the best means of improving and perfecting our Common School System, and of diffusing useful knowledge throughout the mass of our population."[139] His visits were from 29th September to 8th December, 1847. Later in his career, Ryerson did similar tours to publicise and lead public discussion on other proposed measures.[140]

During the tour of 1847, Ryerson delivered his lectures on the importance of education to an agricultural people and to a manufacturing people, choosing the specific topic according to the needs of his audience. Hugh Scobie, admittedly an admirer, wrote in the British Colonist of the success of the venture. "The subject of the Lecture was such, as to elicit the sympathy of the audience in its favour; and the satisfaction of those present with the very able manner in which it was treated, was warmly manifested by the auditory, during the delivery of the Address."[141].

The Globe had urged such a tour and it had reported with

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138. Editorial, Globe, 3 February 1847, p. 38.

139. Circular to District School Superintendents, School Visitors, Trustees and Teachers of Common Schools, 1 September 1847, Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 133.

140. Other tours, 1853, 1860, 1866, 1869, Harris, op. cit., p. 106.

141. Editorial, British Colonist, 22 October 1847, no page number, Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 135 - 6.

some approval Ryerson's intention to make it,[142] yet it seemed not to have noticed that the tour had actually taken place, for in November 1848, it was urging, "We would have some faithful and devoted man to visit every district, and by the most urgent suasion operate on the parents' mind to have their children educated."[143]

By 1850, other devoted men were touring on behalf of education in Upper Canada. The June 1850 issue of the Journal of Education contains a number of reports of a tour by Mr. Robertson, principal of the Normal School, who was speaking in favour of Teachers' Institutes, and of a lecture tour by Mr. Hind, also of the Normal School, who was giving a foretaste of the possibilities of Teachers' Institutes by lecturing on Agricultural Chemistry.[144]

It was important, in Ryerson's view, that the people should come to want education; there should be no question of forcing it upon them. "In a free Country, like Canada," he wrote in 1848, "the people cannot be educated without their own consent and their own voluntary cooperation."[145] All the people must be involved in the process. "An essential instru-

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142. Editorial, Globe, 4 September 1847, p. 280.
143. Ibid., 4 November 1848, p. 273.
144. Journal of Education, (June 1850), p. 93-4.
145. Editorial, ibid., (January 1848), p. 2.

mentality in the universal and thorough education of the people, is the sympathy and active co-operation of the intellectual and wealthy classes. The absence of such sympathy and co-operation has been, and still is to a considerable extent, the most formidable obstacle to the attainment of that great national object."[146]

Involvement of the people could only be of benefit to the whole system of education. In his explanation of the provisions of the proposed School Bill of 1849, Ryerson wrote, "Public opinion . . . will directly operate on the interests of the school (through the election of Trustees); and the very discussion of such questions each year by the people in each School division will tend to awaken attention to the importance of Common School Education, and promote its extension."[147] Consequently, one of the provisions in the proposed school bill was that Trustees should make public a full account of the receipts and expenditure of all school moneys by means of a publicly read Annual School Report.[148] Earlier, Ryerson had urged that teachers should ensure that the local populace were aware of what went on in the school house. "I trust that . . . the Common School Examination and celebrations will be among the most common and interesting

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146. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1849, Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 278.

147. Explanatory Remarks concerning proposed School Bill, 1849, ibid., VIII, p. 88.

148. Proposed Common School Bill, 1849, ibid., VIII, p. 218.

social festivities of the people."[149] In addition to fostering public support, this would also be a safeguard against inefficient teachers.

Although there is an element of doubt about the complete success of the system of School Visitors, they formed an important part of Ryerson's attempt to involve influential members of the public in the Common School system.[150] An article in the Journal of Education, unsigned but probably written by Ryerson, refers to magistrates, the clergy and district councillors being made School Visitors "with a view of securing the influence and co-operation of the leading persons throughout the Province." In this way, the writer believed, the standing of the Common Schools could be raised.[151]

Each Board of Trustees, elected by and from the people, was given important powers at first. It could determine the conditions of admission to the schools, the subjects of instruction, the choice of books and "the regulations for the whole internal management of the Schools under its care." Ryerson recommended that committees be set up to control matters concerning School Houses, Teachers, School Books and Schools.[152] It should be mentioned that Ryerson did not intend, in the long run, to allow too great autonomy at the local level. It is,

149. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 169.

150. Common School Act, 1846, 9th Victoria, Chapter XX.

151. "School Visits and Attendance for the Years 1846-1847", Journal of Education, (May 1848), p. 156-7.

152. Circular to Heads of City and Town Corporations, dated 15 January 1848, ibid., (January 1848), p. 21.

perhaps, a measure of his skill that, during his long term of office, he gradually increased the central control of the system, while, by means of the network of communication and public enlightenment that he was establishing in the early years, he made people feel that they were part of the system.

Centralisation of control demanded that local officials be aware of what was required of them and that their communications with the Department of Education be in a standardised form. Ryerson, therefore, spent long hours in writing circulars, memoranda, articles to be published in his Journal of Education, and demands for reports on all aspects of the conduct and maintenance of schools. Forms, instructions for making reports, and explanatory circulars were sent out regarding the implementation of School Acts.[153] A circular to Mayors of Cities and Towns, regarding the Act of 1847, gave very detailed advice as to the composition and organisation of Boards of Trustees and the conduct and organisation of schools.[154] Samples of educational stationery, including School Registers, Daily Report Books, Class Rolls, were sent in lots of 25 of each to every Municipal Council in 1847.[155]

In spite of this, Ryerson was dissatisfied with the

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153. For example, see Hodgins, op. cit., VI, p. 260 - 265 regarding Common School Act of 1846.

154. Circular to Mayors of Cities and Towns, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 222.

155. Ibid., VII, p. 107.

statistics he was able to present in his Report for 1847, so he sent out a circular to trustees and superintendents in 1848 giving detailed instructions for the completion of forms.[156] In February of the same year, he directed an Address to trustees in which he gave advice on the careful choice of the site for a school, its furniture and apparatus, the value of infrequent changes of teachers "without a strong necessity", the importance of a good relationship between trustees and the teacher, the need for accurate records, the selection of school books, the duty of trustees to provide the "facilities of Religious Instruction by those, whose proper office it is to provide for, and communicate, it", yet always according to the wishes of the parents. Finally, in this address, he summarised very simply the duties of trustees under six headings.[157]

Ryerson would not accept criticism that his requirements and the provisions of Education Acts were too complicated, and defended himself vigorously on this matter. "Of this I have never seen any illustration given, nor any remedy proposed," he said, when it was claimed that the law of 1846 was too complex. He said that he had made a practice of showing how there were only half a dozen specific duties for trustees: they were to employ a teacher; impose and collect rate bills and pay the teacher; repair and warm a School House; select suitable

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156. Circular to Trustees and Superintendents, 15 December 1848, ibid., VIII, p. 56 - 8.

157. Egerton Ryerson, "Address to the Trustees of Common Schools in Upper Canada", February 1848, ibid., VII, p. 225 - 7.

School Books; make an Annual Report and Returns of the numbers of school children; convene annual meetings. He had provided simple forms and directions, he maintained, and commented tartly, "An Act of the Legislature cannot bestow intelligence." Resorting to his frequent device of comparison with other systems, he pointed out that the duties were more complex in the State of New York:[158] in fact, while there were but 45 sections in the Upper Canada School Act in force in 1848, that of the State of New York had nearly 200 sections.[159]

As long as the general public was made sympathetic to Ryerson's policy, he had little need to heed too closely any adverse criticism and there were indications that Ryerson's attempts to involve and educate the people and local officials in his system of education were successful. Mention has been made of adverse comment throwing some doubt on the efficacy of the system of School Visitors; but there were other comments regarding their good effects. A report presented by the Sessional Committee of the Niagara District Municipal Council in 1847 gave the opinion that the effect of frequent visits to schools was to stimulate the teachers, encourage the pupils and "promote the general welfare of the whole school".[160] The School Superintendent of the Midland District, Mr. John Strachan, was more

158. Report to the Government on the School Laws of 1846 and 1847, 14 October 1848, ibid., VIII, p. 83 - 93.

159. Egerton Ryerson, "The Common School Laws of Upper Canada", Journal of Education, (January 1848), p. 26 - 8.

160. Report 9 February 1847, Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 127.

guarded: "I consider that where the Visitors have done their duty, it has been attended with very beneficial results."[161] W.W. Pegg, a pioneer teacher in the County of Norfolk, paid tribute to Local Superintendents who "did much to shape and put into effect" Dr. Ryerson's plans for a school system. One he singles out "often visited the Schools and encouraged both pupils and Teachers by his timely and encouraging remarks".[162]

Another instance of a thoroughly conscientious man in the office of Local Superintendent was C.O. Counsell, whose responsibility was the Hamilton public schools between 1849 and 1853. He is credited with keeping himself well informed of affairs in the schools in his charge and, we are told, "The points on which he dealt with special emphasis were: (1) A better classification of Pupils, (2) improved methods of teaching and of management, (3) proper equipment and (4) adequate accommodation."[163]

Ryerson felt, by 1849, that statistics concerning School Visits indicated a growing interest in educational affairs among the influential and intellectual classes. As was suggested above, the figures do not indicate a generally high frequency of visits but Ryerson pointed out in his Report for 1849 that visits by District Superintendents were up by 140 on the previous year, those by Clergy were up by 594 and, though low in total number,

161. Quoted by Ryerson in his Report for 1847, ibid., VII, p. 176.

162. Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, II, p. 113.

163. Ibid.

those by District Councillors were up by 15. Those by magistrates were down, however, by 36.[164]

The effects of Ryerson's lecture tour in 1847 would seem to have been beneficial. His letters to J. George Hodgins during the tour speak of full lecture halls, much enthusiasm and of Ryerson's regularly routing his opponents by systematic demolition of each of their objections to the Act of 1846.[165]

Ryerson visited and delivered his lecture in the Colborne District on 26th and 27th November 1847[166] and Elias Burnham, the School Superintendent of the district, was one of several quoted by Ryerson in his Report for 1847, acknowledging that progress was discernible, if not in the actual condition of the schools, certainly in the attitude of the populace to education. "With respect to the state of the Common Schools in this District," he reported, "I have the honour to inform you that I regret -- I cannot speak of any material improvement therein during the past year. But I must, however, bear witness to the desire manifested by all classes of people to avail themselves of the benefits of education. . . . The apathy and carelessness which formerly prevailed, have given way to activity and energy."[167]

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164. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1849, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., VIII, p. 278.

165. Ibid., VII, p. 136 - 9.

166. Ibid., VII, p. 135.

167. School Superintendent of Colborne District, quoted in Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 176 - 7.

A more material result would seem to have arisen from one of Ryerson's first engagements on his lecture tour. He spent 1st and 2nd October 1847 in the Wellington District, and the School Superintendent, Alexander Allan, reported at the end of the year that the School Trustees of the district were "more disposed to pay them [i.e., the teachers] better salaries than hitherto".[168]

The controversy over taxation for educational purposes will be considered in the following chapter, but it should be mentioned here that opposition to its imposition diminished as Ryerson's efforts to explain the aims and purpose of the tax took effect.

It seems certain that many local officials experienced difficulty in understanding the provisions of the various Common School Acts passed with perhaps bewildering frequency during the first decade of Ryerson's term of office. Until universal education had become firmly established, it was not reasonable to expect that all trustees and other local officials should be particularly skilled in the art of reading and in following the complexities of Acts of Parliament or Regulations and Circulars. From their point of view, criticism that the measures were too complicated was probably just, but it would not seem reasonable

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168. School Superintendent of Wellington District, quoted in Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 177.

to suggest that Ryerson did not attempt to communicate adequately his wishes. As we have seen, he tried to involve people of different intellectual and social levels in the administration of the education system, some by appointment and some by election. His own efforts in putting his wishes and suggestions into writing were enormous and it would seem that his personal visit to the people in 1847 was most beneficial.

In an article in the Journal of Education of June 1849, entitled "Does Public Sentiment in Favour of Popular Education increase in Upper Canada?", Ryerson replied in the opening words, "We answer, with infinite pleasure and satisfaction, it does." Admittedly, the cook was savouring his own broth, but it was, as we have seen, a view held by others. In 1850, the Superintendent of Schools for the London District, William Eliot, looked back over the previous five years and claimed to have seen "a decided improvement in the Schools of this county and in the public mind in reference to them. For instance, the numerous local disputes which were once so destructive to the progress of the schools are now comparatively hushed. No one is now heard to contend against the ordinary taxation in support of the schools" A little later, it must be confessed, he added, "Of course . . . very much remains to be done."[169]

At the beginning of 1850, Ryerson, himself, summarised

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169. Report of the London District Superintendent for 1849, Journal of Education, (April 1850), p. 60.

the improvements as he saw them. Schools were open on average eight and a half months in the year -- half a month more than in the State of New York, he was pleased to note --, the income from school rate-bills was proportionally as great as in New York, the local assessment had been raised proportionally to the population by as much as in New York, and salaries offered to graduates of the Normal School were 25% higher than they had been in the previous two years.[170] In a previous summary, Ryerson had listed an end to opposition to the principle of taxation in support of schools, increasing school attendance, "the decline of party spirit" and a tendency for people of all religious and political backgrounds to unite in support of "the diffusion of education and knowledge among the children and youth of the land".[171] To another list of achievements to the end of 1849, he added "last in order, but first in importance, an increased interest on a part of a large portion of the people of the several Municipal Districts in respect to Common School Education".[172]

The Superintendent of Niagara District, Dexter D'Everado, echoed this last observation in his Report for 1849[173] and perhaps the most practical demonstration of this interest in and awareness of the possibilities of education at this time, was

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170. Egerton Ryerson, "Address to the Inhabitants of Upper Canada -- Encouragement to persevere in the cause of Common School Education", ibid., (January 1850), p. 1 - 2.

171. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1849, Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 282.

172. Egerton Ryerson, "Explanatory Papers of the Chief Superintendent, relating to education in Upper Canada", ibid., VIII, p. 283 - 289.

173. Ibid., VIII, p. 268.

the petition in January 1849 to the Provincial House of Assembly by a number of Toronto Working Mechanics asking for the establishment of "a Provincial School of Art and Design, where youths intended for the various Artistical and Mechanical businesses, could be prepared for entering with advantage upon their apprenticeships".[174]

There would seem no doubt that Ryerson sought to establish fully centralised control of the education system of Upper Canada and that he was greatly influenced by what he had learnt of education systems in America and Europe. Criticism was made that centralisation was not desirable since the method imposed too great demands on the people at all levels of administration and that foreign influence was resulting in a system having little connection with the particular needs of the Upper Canadian community. Attempts were made to suggest that Ryerson was not a suitable choice for the post of Chief Superintendent and to show that he did not succeed in communicating to his officials and the populace his aims and demands.

While it may be true that many found the new system complicated and that Ryerson's frequent references to foreign sources were irritating to people conscious of their role in building a nation, it would seem that Ryerson genuinely sought to use only those features of foreign systems which were appli-

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174. Ibid., VIII, p. 112.

cable to the Upper Canadian situation and that he made sincere efforts to advise, guide and communicate with all people who were or should be involved in the system of education he was attempting to establish.

It would seem that in public confrontation, as during his speaking tour of 1847, his critics were given short shrift, but there is little evidence that Ryerson's attitude generally to the views of the community was other than sympathetic. Perhaps this is not surprising since, as has been shown in this chapter, his aim was to lead the community into the attitudes he wanted. In this, he seems, during his first decade in office, to have been successful.

CHAPTER III

COMPULSORY, FREE EDUCATION

A system of education based on Christian principles, preparing children for life and employment as members of the community and efficiently organised with the approval and, to some extent, participation of members of the community was Ryerson's desire, but also, as a first step towards compulsion, he intended that such education should be freely available to all children and sought after by their parents.

The education system should provide common school instruction for all children of school age at no direct cost to their parents. Such free, universal education would be paid for by a system of taxation based on ownership of property. Once a free system was established, Ryerson intended to make common school education compulsory in Upper Canada.

This chapter will consider criticism both adverse and supportive of Ryerson's aims regarding this matter and will review his attitudes and replies to such criticism. The areas covered will be Ryerson's advocacy of universal and compulsory education, his desire that education should be free and the

question of general taxation as a means of paying for common school education.

1. Universal and Compulsory Education.

"Should Education be Compulsory?" was the title of an editorial in the Globe late in 1848. Compulsion as a means of inducing parents to educate their children was objectionable to the Globe which frequently accused Ryerson of despotic "Prussian" tendencies. Such compulsion was seen as the thin end of a wedge. "If the principle is once adopted that the law ought to compel moral or intellectual improvement by pains and penalties, where will it stop?" asked the writer. Both religious observance and temperance were desirable but they were not compelled by law. By its being made compulsory, the Globe maintained, "education would be lowered and degraded."[1]

A similar view had been expressed earlier by William Elliott, the Local Superintendent of Schools for the Town of London, in a letter to Ryerson commenting on aspects of the Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada. A uniform system and compulsory education were, in his opinion, possible in a country like Prussia but "in Canada, the mass of the population are far from being alive to the advantages of educating the children, and the slightest attempt

1. Editorial, Globe, Toronto, 4 November 1848, p. 273.

on the part of the Legislature to introduce compulsion is regarded as an infringement upon individual right and liberty, which is not to be endured."[2]

Similar speculation as to the effects of compulsory education were to be made some fifteen years later in England, where, up to the moment when compulsion was considered, there had been greater public interest shown in voluntary education than in Upper Canada. The Newcastle Commission, reporting in 1861, declared no intention of recommending the introduction of compulsory education. "An attempt to replace an independent system of education by a compulsory system, managed by the Government, would be met by objections both religious and political, of far graver character in this country than any with which it has had to contend in Prussia."[3]

In Upper Canada, as will be shown, Ryerson brought the general public to accept the concept of compulsory education, while the English method was to allow the spread of compulsion by means of local by-laws.[4]

It was true, as Elliott said, that the mass of the population of Upper Canada was not alive to the advantages of educating its children. Settlers were too busy providing the

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2. Letter, 18 July 1846, J. George Hodgins, Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada, Vol. VI, (Toronto, L.K. Cameron, 1894 - 1910), p. 215 - 6.

3. Report of the Newcastle Commission, Vol. I, p. 300, H.C. Barnard, A History of English Education, (London, University of London Press, 2nd edn 1961, first pub. 1947), p. 110 - 1.

4. Barnard, op. cit., p. 169.

necessities of life, and struggling for civil and religious freedom and equality, to be over-concerned about education.[5] Compulsory education would quite likely be seen as a threat to their civil liberty. Further, there was strong feeling in some quarters that universal education was undesirable. Mention has been made of teachers considering that common schools were not for vagrant children unused to order and discipline. There were others who would limit the provision of education further.

In 1825, control of schools in Upper Canada had been placed in the hands of a General Board of Education under the chairmanship of John Strachan, later Bishop of Toronto. The Board disbanded in 1833, largely because of Strachan's championship of the traditional grammar school against the demands of reformers wanting common schools for all. An important element in the 1837 Rebellion was the clash between the "Family Compact" composed of well-to-do members of original Loyalist families, and the elected members of the Legislative Assembly. The "Family Compact" favoured grammar schools where children of élite families might be trained for leadership, while the elected representatives supported the reform view of universal education in common schools. Frequently, measures regarding popular education proposed by the Assembly, had been vetoed by the Legislative Council, the Upper House, since the latter body had little

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5. J. Harold Putman, Egerton Ryerson and Education in Upper Canada, (Toronto, Wm Briggs, 1912), p. 97.

sympathy with the common man.[6]

Strong views against universal education were expressed by a Toronto Congregationalist minister, the Reverend John Roaf, in a letter written, in 1852, to the Globe. His argument was based on the mobility of the population, whereby many people moved from the Toronto area to attempt to settle further West. He argued that there was nothing to be gained from educating all children because three quarters of the children in Toronto Common Schools would probably leave the area. His Christian charity did not seem to extend to acknowledging that the education gained in Toronto might benefit the new areas where the children might settle, nor did it prevent him from being incensed that other children would move into the Toronto schools from elsewhere and "use our property for their own benefit". He added a further objection that, if everyone learned to write, there would be an increase in the incidence of forgery.[7] Roaf's views tended in the more extreme, élitist direction and it is interesting to note that, while many people were arguing that a benefit of universal education would be a reduction in crime, as children were given less opportunity to roam the streets of towns, Roaf suggested that at least one branch of criminal activity would be fostered by universal education.

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6. Sylvia Carlton, Egerton Ryerson and Education in Ontario, 1844 - 1877, (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1950), p. 17.

7. Letter, Globe, 5 February 1852, p. 63.

There were many concerned people who felt that compulsory universal education was necesary not only to provide learning and skills but also to combat social problems. The growth of urbanisation had led to the increasing numbers of children being in the streets without occupation or supervision; many children did have occupations but as drudges in factories. Children in town and country were kept at home sometimes to do only menial tasks and were in no way improving themselves. There was a growing middle class anxiety about the shaping of suitable attitudes in the young, not only from the social and religious point of view but also with regard to qualities of punctuality, attendance and skill desirable in a work force.

Ryerson's definition of compulsion was different from that attributed to him by such critics as George Brown of the Globe. Ryerson said that compulsory attendance was founded on the principle that "every child in the land has a right to such an education as will fit him to be an honest and useful member of the community", and if the parent, through inhumanity or cupidity, would not provide the education, the State must protect the community from having "an uneducated savage, an idle vagabond, or an unprincipled thief" thrust into it.[8] He intended, though, as with all his measures, to lead rather than drive, the people into what he considered the desirable

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8. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, Hodgins, op. cit., VI, p. 207.

way. His aim was to combine the plans for compulsory and free education so that, by removing the problem of rate-bills, he could make parents want to send their children to school.

The cost of maintaining the school and paying the teacher was partly covered by means of a rate-bill levied on parents on the basis of the number of children attending the school. In Ryerson's estimation, this rate-bill tempted parents to keep their children away from school, the frequency being in proportion to the number of children in the family to be educated. If education were made free, the cost being covered by a general tax, all would be on equal terms. Parents withholding their children, Ryerson believed, would fear the scorn of their neighbours and so universal education would occur without the need for statute law. "This", wrote Ryerson in 1849, "is the system of 'compulsory education' I wish to see everywhere in operation."[9]

Once again, Ryerson showed his skill in achieving his ends without seeming too obviously to be using coercion. Compulsion by law was not introduced until the Education Act of 1871. In the interval, Ryerson made a careful study of the progress of compulsory education in Europe and America, and allowed the population of Upper Canada to become accustomed to

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9. Egerton Ryerson, "Address to the Inhabitants of Upper Canada on the System of Free Schools", Egerton Ryerson, (ed.), Journal of Education, Toronto, (January 1849), p. 1 - 5.

sending their children to school as the normal state of things. When the moment came, attendance at school was made compulsory but for four months of the year. In this, Ryerson lagged behind one of his favourite models, Massachusetts, which had six months compulsory attendance at that time.[10] However, Ryerson had made matters move in the direction he wanted, so that objection to the passage of the law would be minimized.

Gradually, the populace came to accept the need for universal education as they had other aspects of education advocated by Ryerson, though rumbles of objection continued to be heard. One such was neatly turned by the editor of the Journal of Education, J. George Hodgins, in 1851. He referred to a letter which had appeared in the Hamilton Spectator on 5th February that year, denouncing the free school system. Hodgins commented, "The perusal of the letter itself would, we think, convince the most skeptical of the absolute necessity of a more generous diffusion of education, especially in the neighbourhood of the writer -- scarcely two words in the letter being correctly spelled!"[11]

2. Free Education

Ryerson felt that in order for education to be universal and compulsory, it must not impose a particular financial burden on parents. The cost should be met by a general tax based on

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10. Nathanael Burwash, Egerton Ryerson, (The Makers of Canada Series), (Toronto, Morang), 1903, p. 206.

11. Editorial, Journal of Education, (February 1851), p. 8 - 9.

property ownership and education should therefore be, in effect, free.

Immediately, cries arose regarding the removal of control implied by payment for educational services received; and the fact that the new approach would have to be imposed by law called forth from the Globe its echoing cry of "Prussianism". "It is 'Prussian' to decree that all children shall be educated and that it be free", an editorial declaimed in 1848.[12] This thought was repeated a few months later, referring particularly to the abolition of Rate Bills and the Globe expressed support for an unnamed correspondent from Dunnville who had written to point out that such abolition would take away control of the education system from parents and trustees.[13] A week later, the Globe expressed doubts regarding the wisdom of free education although acknowledging its acceptance in some States of America.[14]

Another correspondent to the Globe, Dr. Jarron, also from Dunnville and a member of Niagara District Council, called free schooling "Communism", a term somewhat unexpected in mid-nineteenth century Canada and making an interesting contrast with the paper's charge of "Prussianism". He saw in the danger of free schooling the possibility of its leading to sectarian control of schools, though he did not explain how, and suggested by inference that

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12. Editorial, Globe, 10 May 1848, p. 150.

13. Editorial, ibid., 2 December 1848, p. 386.

14. Editorial, ibid., 9 December 1848, p. 394.

he meant control by the Roman Catholic Church. "A very little enquiry into the history of Common School education in Europe", he wrote, "will show that it has been . . . under the control of the ecclesiastical authorities, who never failed to use it as an engine to inculcate their own opinions and support their power."

Dr. Jarron advocated total local control by trustees, but since he also commented on the fact that many country people, faced with rate-bills to pay the local teacher, often withdrew their children from school when small attendance at the school threatened an increased rate-bill, it is not clear what method of financing education would have satisfied the doctor.[15]

It seems clear that there was strong opposition in Upper Canada to the idea of free schooling. A retired teacher wrote to Hodgins, reminiscing about a public meeting at Iroquois Grammar School on the subject of free schools. Dr. Ryerson, he recalled, "made a clear, logical and forceful speech, advocating his theory; but, notwithstanding, he was confronted by an indignant opposition from those who did not wish to be taxed for educational purposes."[16]

The view from Lower Canada was that the Upper Canadians

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15. Letter, ibid., 30 December 1848, p. 418.
16. Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 300.

did, perhaps, protest too much. Jean-Baptiste Meilleur, the Superintendent of Education for Lower Canada, commenting on the Upper Canadian system of education, said that the inhabitants of Upper Canada, having much better soil and climate than those of Lower Canada, were therefore much richer, yet they made a great fuss over taxes and, the sting being in the tail, their School Act did not work any better than that in Lower Canada.[17]

The Superintendent of Schools for Etobicoke Township felt that apathy more correctly described the attitude of his neighbours on the subject of free schooling. "There is one Free-school in the Township; but I regret to state that it does not indicate that amount of interest, on the part of the parents, which is essential to the efficient working of our school machinery." This extract from the Superintendent's Report for 1849 was printed in the Journal of Education, so it would seem reasonable to assume that it was typical of a larger body of people than merely the inhabitants of Etobicoke, it being the Journal's practice to give glimpses of the opposition as well as supporting forces.[18]

It was quickly realised that education provided free to the parents of children had still to be paid for by someone

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17. "The Upper Canada Common School System, as viewed by Doctor Jean B. Meilleur, Chief Superintendent of Education for Lower Canada, 1842-1852", ibid., VIII, p. 61.

18. Journal of Education, (May 1850), p. 77 - 8.

and obviously the load would be spread over the whole community whether they were, or wished to be, concerned in education or not. Burwash commented that a strong feature of the opposition to much of Ryerson's work was that "in almost all its features it touched the pockets of the people who had never before regarded education as a matter in which they had any special concern, and also of the people who desired education, but at as cheap a rate as possible. . . . All the essential features of the system . . . were thus assailed, nominally as unnecessary, but really on the ground of expense."[19]

An extreme view was expressed in the somewhat notorious Memorial to the Legislature by Gore District Council in 1847: "Nor do your memorialists hope to provide qualified teachers by any other means in the present circumstances of the country than securing as heretofore the services of those whose physical disabilities from age render this mode of obtaining a livelihood the only one suited to their decaying energies, or by employing such of the newly arrived emigrants as are qualified for common school teachers, year by year, as they come among us, and who will adopt this as a means of temporary support until their character and ability are known and turned to better account for themselves."[20]

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19. Burwash, op. cit., p. 180.

20. "Gore District Council Memorial to the Legislature against the Common School Act, 1846", 1847, Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 115.

It should be noted that Colborne District Council, having read the above Memorial, made a report expressing disagreement with Gore District Council's attitude. The decaying or newly arrived, it was pointed out, would be "the preceptors of our children; the dictators of their sentiments and manners, the guardians of their virtue; and, in a high degree, the masters of their future destinies in this world and the next".[21] They made it clear that the parsimonious attitude of those like the members of Gore District Council could only rebound adversely, in the long run.

There was some reluctance on the part of teachers to money being spent on some aspects of education. Money was taken from the school grant, the government contribution towards local school expenses including teachers' salaries, to provide the necessary funds for a grant of four shillings per week to pupils of the Normal School. This was to go towards the cost of their board. Teachers in service were unwilling to see this as a move towards improvement of their profession and perhaps associating them with the improvement; but complained that the money was, in fact, being taken from them. There seems no evidence that this was precisely so but teachers went further. They complained that they were actually helping to educate in normal school others who would eventually

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21. Report of Colborne District Council, 1848, ibid., VII, p. 116-8.

displace them.[22]

A further instance of public reluctance to spend money on education was in the dispute between Toronto City Council and the School Trustees of that City, as a result of which Toronto Common Schools were closed for a year from 1st July 1848.[23] The basis of the argument was that it was unjust to make rate-payers pay for the education of other people's children.[24] Since this dispute illustrates a typical objection to a method of financing education by spreading the load over all taxpayers, it may be useful to consider the matter in some detail.

Before the passing of the Common School Act for Cities and Towns in Upper Canada[25] of 1847, municipalities had obtained funds for education purposes partly from an annual Parliamentary grant based on the local population figures, partly from an annual assessment on property-owners designed to produce an amount equal to the Parliamentary Grant and from rate-bills, or school-dues, collected by teachers from the parents of the pupils. This last, in the case of Toronto, represented more than half the total amount.

The Act of 1847 made it no longer legal for teachers to collect money from parents and all money, except for the Parliamentary Grant, had to be found by means of a tax on

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22. Putman, op. cit., p. 236.

23. Announcement headed "Common School Notice", Globe, 1 July 1848, p. 211.

24. Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 68.

25. 10th and 11th Victoria, Chapter XIX.

property.

On 17th April 1848, the Board of Trustees for Toronto sent in to the City Council an estimate for £2,009. 17s. 7d. which was required by the Board to maintain the schools of the City for 1848.[26] The estimate was referred to the Council's Standing Committee on Education, composed of three Aldermen, and they produced a Report recommending that Council refuse to levy that amount by assessment on property.[27] It would need at least a rate of 4½d in the £ on all reateable property in the City. Indeed they considered the rate up to then to have been high and this was more than they could accept.

Furthermore, the Standing Committee expressed surprise that no-one had sought the City Council's opinion before the 1847 Act had been passed, "more particularly too as the Chief Superintendent of Education, who . . . prepared the original draft of the Bill, of 1847, has his residence in this City." They seemed to have overlooked the fact that, if Toronto City Council had been consulted -- assuming such consultation necessary or desirable --, all other councils would have had to be given the same rights, which would have complicated and slowed the legislative process.

26. Estimate, 17 April 1848, Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 68-9.

27. Report of the Standing Committee on Education, Toronto City Council, 1 May 1848, ibid., VIII, p. 69-71.

The Standing Committee argued that, although the Act said that the tax must be levied, the Council should have the choice, because otherwise, "the people would virtually be taxed, for local purposes, by an authority different from that of their own constitutional, local, government; -- an anomaly at once repugnant to British freedom and common sense." The Law, they maintained, prescribed the manner in which Municipalities should determine the amount of tax but "it does not, and cannot, enforce upon them the absolute necessity of levying the assessment." This was, perhaps, what lawyers term "a nice point".

To levy the tax suggested in the Estimate could be contrary to the purposes for which Councillors had been elected, the argument continued. The Standing Committee recommended a return to a collection of school dues by teachers, or some way other than the imposition of the School tax in the manner required by the 1847 Act.

The City Council accepted the report and, at its request, the Board of Trustees submitted a reduced estimate on 26th June 1848 for £1,795. 17s. 4d., over half of which would have to be collected by the teachers, making each one, in the Trustees' words, "a genteel beggar".[28] The levy on property would now be at the rate of 1½d. in the £.

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28. Estimate, 26 June 1848, ibid., VIII, p. 72-3.

The City Council turned down the estimate and, on 29th June, the City School Superintendent, George A. Barber, issued a notice saying, "Inasmuch as the Common Council of the City of Toronto have declined to make the required appropriation, for the purpose of continuing the Common Schools after the 30th of June, 1848, the Trustees of Common Schools are reduced to the painful necessity of closing the said Schools on and after the 1st July." Teachers' services would not be required after that date.[29]

Hodgins points out that the City Council of Toronto had made a practice of opposing the fiscal demands of the previous acts of 1841, 1843 and 1846. They did not levy a rate on property to support schools until 1850, when School Law gave them no alternative.[30]

Hodgins points out in a footnote that consultation had taken place in that Ryerson had sought the opinions of rate-payers generally at conventions and during school visitations, and he quotes an article on the subject written in May 1848 by Hugh Scobie, but gives no indication of where or precisely when it was published. In this Scobie pointed out that the Act of 1847 had passed through the Legislature with little opposition and had received the support of "the then Mayor and three

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29. Announcement, Toronto City School Superintendent, 29 June 1848, ibid., VIII, p. 74.

30. Ibid., VIII, p. 74.

Aldermen of the City, who held seats in the Legislative Assembly".[31]

The Toronto Common Schools were reopened after a year's closure, but until 1850, they were kept open for only six months in the year. A School Board was formed as required by the Act of 1847, and, after "a vigorous and well sustained discussion", surely a most diplomatic description in view of the evidence, it was agreed to establish free schools supported by taxation.[32]

The greater part of the populace of Upper Canada at this time had, by their own efforts, established themselves and their families in whatever socio-economic stratum they had reached. Co-operation had, no doubt, occurred in the process but this implied the receipt of like services to those given. When the time came that settlers and citizens could consider education for their children, most people felt that this, too, should be acquired only as the result of the personal effort or expense of those seeking it. Those who had gained wealth should not be expected to pay more than was required to educate their own children: those who could not afford the fees must struggle further in order to reach the necessary level

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31. Ibid., VIII, p. 76-7.

32. J.L. Hughes, Chief Inspector of Schools for the City of Toronto, "Sketch of the Establishment of the Toronto Public Schools", J. George Hodgins, Schools and Colleges in Ontario 1792-1910, Vol. I, (Toronto, King's Printer, 1910), p. 23-4.

of wealth.

Nearly a century and a half later, when the pioneering struggle may be considered over, there is still strong feeling in Canada that one should earn what one receives. The opposition to such social schemes as a guaranteed minimum wage may be seen as evidence of this.

Ryerson's plans for a free school system based on general taxation met, therefore, with some opposition on the grounds of its injustice. Toronto City Council had declared that parents should be responsible for costs of the education of their own children and the Reverend John Roaf, in a letter to the Globe, underlined this view, carrying the argument further into the structure of society. It was not right, he maintained, that mechanics and labourers should educate their children at the expense of the wealthy. "I am happy to inform you," he wrote to the editor of the Globe, "that school section No. 1, Township of York, . . . have this day negatived a proposal to have a free school. . . . The mechanics and labourers here have thus discharged the power, for there cannot be any such right, so wrongfully given them by the School Act, to educate their children at the expense of their more wealthy neighbours."[33]

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33. Letter, Globe, 31 January 1852, p. 54.

Robert Spence, owner and editor of the Dundas Warder, expressed the opinion that the taxation of property was just but he, too, felt that the responsibility of payment for education should rest with the parents. "It is not just", he wrote, "that the entire burden should be taken off the shoulders of those, who directly receive the benefits to be derived from Education, and thrown on those who do not directly receive any."[34]

The community cannot be seen to benefit from a child's education until the child has left school and has begun to apply in business, other employment or voluntary services, the skills and attitudes learnt in schooling. Some people find it impossible to look ahead the ten or fifteen years to appreciate that today's expense can be the next decade's gain. Yet, the better the process of education, the more useful will be the future citizens of a country and the better will be the civilisation experienced in that country. Since all citizens will benefit from the conditions of the country, it would seem that all have not only a financial but also a moral responsibility to provide for the education of all children, and not merely their progeny.

An argument in favour of free schools was that many people kept their children away from school because they could not

34. Dundas Warder, 12 May 1848, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., VIII, p. 61.

meet the cost of paying the teacher. The Globe disputed this. It pointed out that a simple application to the trustees was all that was necessary for, by the Act of 1846, the indigent could be excused the payment of the Rate-bill.[35] If, argued the Globe, somewhat illogically, all were no longer to pay Rate-bills, all children would now be paupers and, because of pride, the people would now keep their children away from "what even the Doctor admits will be 'pauper Schools'".[36]

It is not clear to what utterance of Ryerson the Globe is alluding, for Ryerson did not suggest that free schools were in any way synonymous with pauper schools. In a letter to the Globe, to which the editorial was a reply, Ryerson had said, "The present School Act places the poor man and his children upon equal footing with his rich neighbour and his children in respect . . . to the Common Schools."[37] This is not quite what is implied in the editorial.

The belief that nothing was considered of value unless paid for was strong. Free education, it was claimed, would not therefore be appreciated by students or parents, a view which would bear consideration in relation to problems of attitude in schooling of the late twentieth century. The Globe maintained

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35. Ibid., VI, p. 66.

36. Editorial, Globe, 10 May 1848, p. 150.

37. Letter, ibid., p. 150.

in 1848, "Those who receive education gratis would prize it much less than those who have something to pay for it,"[38] and, "Experience has shown that that which costs nothing, is valued at nothing." A free system, it believed, would lead to no improvement in the state of education. Free education would "render school attendance desultory and variable, because unpaid for, and always to be had for asking."[39]

A development of this view was that when parents pay for education and teachers rely on that payment, the latter do a better job and the former see that they do so. Spence wrote, "When parents pay, they will be vigilant and jealous in reference to the moral and mental improvement of their children." With the imposition of a tax on property to pay for education, the parent's attitude would be changed, for "it is not for his child he pays, it is for his property". Teachers, he claimed, would have no urge to enforce attendance since their pay would no longer depend on the number of scholars entering their school.[40]

The Reverend John Roaf, who seemed to express the most extreme views against Ryerson's proposals for free education, expressed the opinion that the free system "divests the teacher of all

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38. Editorial, ibid., 9 December 1848, p. 394:

39. Editorial, ibid., 10 May 1848, p. 150.

40. Dundas Warder, 12 May 1848, Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 61.

proprietary and personal interest in his school, and will speedily render him sycophantic and servile to his trustees, but haughty and negligent towards his pupils and friends".[41] That the teacher might lose "proprietary and personal interest in his school" seems, as Spence had indicated, a reasonable possibility, but the opinion that he would become sycophantic to trustees and negligent to his pupils suggests an attitude towards teachers in general on a par with that of Gore District Council who, as has been shown, considered only the decaying or indigent suitable candidates for the job of teaching.

Roaf believed also that the action of taking the expense of education from the parents' shoulders would weaken the parental tie binding parents and children. He felt, too, that it was undesirable that all classes should mingle in a school, a prospect that loomed when education became freely available.[42] In this last statement, he was expressing the élitist view of supporters of the group known as the "Family Compact".

Like Pantagruel, Ryerson had in mind an inscription which he would have liked to see lettered in gold over each school house door. Ryerson's choice was "Education for all, without money and without price."[43]

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41. Letter, Globe, 5 February 1852, p. 63.

42. Ibid.

43. Editorial, Journal of Education, (May 1850), p. 72.

Previous to his introduction of the concept of free education, "each parent," said Ryerson, "however poor, was rated for his children, however numerous, or else had to send them to School as paupers." The consequence was a very low attendance as only some of the children in a family might be sent to school, or they were sent on a rotation basis. However, as we have seen, the School Act of 1847 put the rich and the poor on an equal footing in the matter of paying the cost of education, since each had to contribute according to his ownership of property. Although some might object, Ryerson refused to heed such objections and believed that in the long run, "enlightened Christian philanthropy and true patriotism will rejoice at its application."[44]

Although Ryerson saw the equality being that of the poor man with his rich neighbour, there were many who saw it as the equality of the rich man with his poor neighbour, which can be a very different matter and led to statements such as that in the Globe, referred to earlier, to the effect that even Dr. Ryerson called his schools "pauper schools".[45]

Poverty, or "the gangrene of pauperism" as Ryerson called it, was felt by many to be the breeding ground for crime and social ills of all kinds. Education freely available to all

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44. Statement by the Chief Superintendent of Education, May 1848, Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 52.

45. Editorial, Globe, 10 May 1848, p. 150.

was seen by Ryerson as "the most effectual preventative of pauperism, and its natural companions, misery and crime".[46] When the Toronto schools were at last thrown open free after the dispute over costs had closed them for a year, an article in the Journal of Education commented that the children of that city had been left for "a year's unrestrained association together in the streets of the City, indulging in vice and profanity".[47]

In Ryerson's view, the State had a duty to educate the ordinary people as well as the upper classes, because the former, the work force, were the true source of the nation's wealth and strength. "If the higher classes are to be, and are, provided by public endowments, with the means of a University Education; the common people . . . should be provided by the State, with the means of a Common School Education."[48] The State's duty, in Ryerson's opinion, extended to compulsion where the parent had not the sense or inclination to educate his children. "Compel the untutored and misguided parent to pay his quota for the actual operations of the School, and a door of instruction will be opened to his children."[49]

There is a degree of contradiction between this last

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46. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, Hodgins, op. cit., VI, p. 143.

47. Author unknown, "Free Schools in the City of Toronto", Journal of Education, (June 1849), p. 96.

48. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, Hodgins, op. cit., VI, p. 194.

49. Circular to Wardens of Districts, 14 January 1848, Journal of Education, (January 1848), p. 4-16.

statement by Ryerson and his frequently uttered belief that the people could be led by encouragement and example to educate all their children regularly. The statement is perhaps best seen as a glimpse of the iron fist which was always present beneath Ryerson's velvet glove. Each of his plans was finally embodied in the law but, as we have seen in a previous chapter, his method was usually to prepare the public mind thoroughly beforehand, so that the law seemed often to be a statement of the public will, and frequently the people were not aware of changes until they had been accomplished.[50]

Where the free school system was introduced, the results seemed to justify Ryerson's contention that the rate-bill system, where parents were charged for the education of each child, had kept many children from school. A sharp rise in average school attendance was evident in the years immediately following the introduction of the idea of free schooling, according to figures given by Ryerson in Explanatory Papers which he published in conjunction with his Report for the year 1849.[51] The average attendance in Common Schools for 1847 was given as 89,991; for 1848, the figures show a rise of 63.54% to 147,170; and in 1849, there is a further increase to 150,670.

The District Superintendent of Niagara, Dexter D'Everardo,

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50. J. Keith Jobling, The Role of the Superintendents in the Development of Education in Upper and Lower Canada, 1842-1867, (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1971), p. 89.

51. "Explanatory Papers of the Chief Superintendent relating to Education in Upper Canada", Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 285.

whose reports were always lucid and informative, said that five-sixths of those "most competent to judge" considered the rate-bill on parents to be unsatisfactory and believed that it had the effect of keeping children out of school. The free school system, on the other hand, would increase the numbers attending school. He felt that proof of this was to be seen in parts of his district between 1847 and 1848 where both systems were tried. In 1847, under the rate-bill system, 527 pupils attended school out of a possible total of 953 children of school age. The following year, when the free system based on a general tax, was in operation in these areas, 969 pupils attended out of a possible 994.[52]

Dramatic increases in school attendance after the introduction of the free school system were reported from other sources. A letter to the Journal of Education from a trustee in the Township of Ancaster in Gore District related how the change to a free school had led to an increase in the number of children on the school register from 27 to 47. Another letter from Preston in Wellington District told of an increase from 25 to 110.[53]

In the Explanatory Papers referred to above, Ryerson gave the following tables showing "some of the statistics" resulting from decisions by local authorities either to establish free schooling or to continue in the more traditional manner of fee-

52. Report of the District Superintendent of Niagara, 1848, ibid., VIII, p. 99.

53. Letters, 26 and 27 February 1850, quoted in "Editorial Notices", Journal of Education, (March 1850), p. 48.

paying.[54] Ryerson gave no explanation of his reasons for choosing the areas presented in the tables but, with certain reservations, discussed below, they seem to indicate that Ryerson was right to believe that where free schools were introduced, a greater proportion of children of school age would enrol in the schools.

The first table shows the number of pupils enrolled in school in five areas which, it must be assumed, Ryerson considered typical of those where free schools had been introduced during the year 1848 - 9. For comparison, there is also given the "school population", that is, the number of children of school age in each area.

The second table gives similar figures for five areas, again to be assumed typical, where free schools were not in operation at all during the same year.

TABLE A.

Districts and Towns, in which the Free School System has been in partial operation during the year 1848,9:-

	School Population	Pupils Enrolled
Niagara District	11,848	9,348
Niagara Town (adopted fully)	688	716
Prince Edward District	5,634	4,212
Talbot District	6,694	4,365
Brock District	9,414	5,811

54. "Explanatory Papers of the Chief Superintendent relating to Education in Upper Canada", Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 285.

TABLE B.

Districts and Towns, in which the Free School System has not been in operation during the year 1848,9:-

	School Population	Pupils Enrolled
Home District	28,589	13,784
City of Toronto	5,500	1,678
Colborne District	7,700	2,995
Huron District	2,482	2,459
City of Kingston	3,461	524

It has been indicated in the previous chapter that the reliability of statistics depended greatly on the accuracy of the information collected and passed on by local officials. Statistical error at the local level may account for the remarkable situation reported in Niagara Town where apparently more children attended school than there were in the local population. When the above tables were repeated in the Journal of Education,[55] they occasioned the comment quoted earlier from "Observer", "This seems like a second miracle of the 'Loaves and Fishes' in favour of the Free School System."[56]

Ignoring the figures for Niagara Town, it will be seen from the first table that an average of 70.66% of the school population was enrolled in schools in the remaining four districts where the free school system had been in only partial operation during the year 1848-9.

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55. Egerton Ryerson, "Does Public Sentiment in favour of Popular Education increase in Upper Canada?", Journal of Education, (June 1849), p. 88-9.

56. Globe, 19 July 1849, p. 135.

Where free schools had not been in operation during that period, the proportional enrolment is shown to be some 25% lower. The second table shows that in the five Districts and Towns selected by Ryerson, 44.92% of the school population was enrolled in the schools during 1848-9 while the free school system was not in operation.

Allowing for the fact that the figures in the tables were selected and presented by Ryerson to support his own claims regarding the increase in attendance at school brought about by the free school system and that there is no attempt to correlate the areas used in sociological terms, the considerable difference between the average proportional attendance of the school population in the areas of the two tables seems to justify his claim.

Perhaps the most dramatic change following the introduction of free schools was in the attitude of the Globe newspaper. Having campaigned vigorously against Ryerson and what it called his "pauper schools", the Globe published with delight reports of meetings held in January 1852 at which school trustees favouring free schools were elected. The heading given to one such report was adorned with no less than three exclamation marks: "Triumph of Free Schools!!!"[57] Such a change in the Globe's attitude would seem to be a further indication that the idea of free schooling was gaining in public favour.

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57. Globe, 15 January 1852, p. 26.

Critics had claimed that nothing is valued unless paid for, but it seems clear that, in some areas, at least, more parents were sending their children, and, presumably, more of their children, to the free schools. One may see in this some justification for Ryerson's not succumbing to adverse criticism in this matter.

3. Ryerson and Taxation.

The free school system meant that parents were not required to pay specifically for the education of each of their children attending school, but the teacher still had to be paid. The free system provided equal opportunities for all, rich and poor alike, to educate their children, and Ryerson felt that the costs should be borne by everyone, since, in the long run, the benefits of an educated people would be felt by the whole community.

Ryerson introduced the idea in his Draft Common School Bill for Upper Canada, made in 1846. He wrote, "The next important change I propose is, that the Rate Bill, imposed by the Trustees of each School Section, shall be levied upon the inhabitants of each School Section, generally, according to property." He went on, a little later in the same document, "I know of none who will object to it but the rich, the childless, and the selfish."[58]

58. "Draft Common School Bill for Upper Canada, 1846", Hodgins, op. cit., VI, p. 76.

In a footnote added to Hodgins' presentation of the Draft Bill in his Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada, Ryerson tells of immediate opposition to the idea by rather more than half the members of the Legislative Assembly. "The important clause of the Bill thus recommended, was strongly advocated by Mr. Attorney-General Draper, but was opposed and lost in the Assembly by a majority of four or five."[59] If the opposition to the proposed property tax numbered only four or five in excess of half the members of the Legislative Assembly, it would seem that, even at the beginning, there was strong support for Ryerson's proposal.

The following year, 1847, local authorities were empowered to make their own decision on whether to impose a tax on property to pay for education.[60] Ryerson went on in the footnote referred to above, "But we rejoice that the principle thus first submitted to the consideration of the Government in 1846, has been incorporated into our system of schools for Cities and Incorporated Towns in Upper Canada, and that District Councils have also been invested with power to act upon it, as far as they may think it advisable."[61]

The loss of a direct financial link between parent and teacher was felt to be a serious fault in the system of general

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59. Footnote, ibid.

60. An Act for Amending the Upper Canada Common School Act of 1846, 1847, 10th and 11th Victoria, Chapter XIX.

61. Hodgins, op. cit., VI, p. 76, footnote.

property taxation. Spence feared that the personal relationships in schooling would be destroyed. Writing of the plans for a property tax, he said, "The principle now disclosed is unjust, arbitrary, and inapplicable to the circumstances of Canada. . . . The tie which, heretofore existed between the Teacher and the parent of the taught, is severed . . . and it becomes a matter of total indifference now how Schools be conducted so long as the Teachers' salaries be provided."[62]

The Globe expressed belief in the parental tie which should not only be experienced but be seen to exist. "It is essentially necessary that the child should know and feel that his education, as well as his food and clothing are furnished to him by his parents." A general tax would make this situation impossible. The Globe believed that the major costs, school houses and what it called "general staff expenses" should be met by the Province -- presumably as a result of other taxes than the property tax proposed by Ryerson -- but rate-bills should be met by "those whose children get the benefit of them". It acknowledged that some would not be able to afford school taxes, so a sum should be paid on their behalf to the teacher by the District Council. Again, the Globe did not make clear how this body should obtain the money, unless it was assumed that it would be found from the Government Grant, which itself depended on taxes. With the exception of the payment to teachers

62. Editorial, Dundas Warder, 12 May 1848, ibid., VIII, p. 61.

on behalf of the indigent, the Globe's counsel to the District Council was that "it would make the salaries of the Teachers chiefly depend on their own exertions".[63] It would seem that the writer of the editorial intended that teachers should continue to go cap in hand seeking payment of the rate-bills. The next chapter will show that it was part of Ryerson's policy to end this practice.

The argument was reiterated that parents alone should be responsible for the costs of educating their children. In its report to Toronto City Council in 1848, during the controversy over the use of public money for the support of public schools, the Standing Committee on Education emphasised that, in its opinion, any levy of taxes for education purposes should be on the parents of pupils only.[64] The Globe maintained that school taxes should be paid by "those whose children get the benefit of them"[65] and, referring to Ryerson's attempt to introduce a general tax of 4½d in the pound on property, instead of the rate bills paid by parents, the Globe, taking the opportunity for a thrust at Ryerson's plans for centralised control, said, "He did not wish that the parents should be obliged to pay even a trifle for the education of their children, for that would lead them to take an interest in the management of the Schools."[66]

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63. Editorial, Globe, 20 December 1848, p. 406.

64. Report of the Standing Committee on Education of Toronto City Council, 1 May 1848, Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 69-71.

65. Globe, loc. cit.

66. Editorial, ibid., 3 May 1848, p. 142.

Although, as has been noted above, the Globe was eventually converted to support of the free school system, it was slower to accept the principle of general taxation for education purposes. In 1852, the Globe was still maintaining that it was unjust and tyrannical to tax people who were childless in order to pay for the education of families containing many children.[67] The Standing Committee on Education for Toronto City Council had gone further: free schools were an infringement of individual choice and to tax people without children would be tyrannous, socialistic, and "repugnant to British freedom and common sense".[68]

While accepting the principle of a general imposition of taxes, the Superintendent of Bathurst District, the Reverend James Padfield, did not like to feel that the benefit of the money collected should be spread universally. He considered that the amount raised in each School Section should be repaid, "(the necessary deductions being made)", to that School Section, or the whole amount collected in all the Townships of a District should be divided by the number of schools actually in operation, again with the proviso regarding "necessary deductions".[69]

Critics felt that better value for money could be obtained from the methods they advocated. A correspondent to the

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67. Editorial, ibid., 5 January 1852.

68. Report of the Standing Committee on Education of Toronto City Council, 1 May 1848, Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 70.

69. Report of the Superintendent of Bathurst District, 1847, Journal of Education, (April 1848), p. 116-9.

Globe, signing himself "Observer", wrote concerning the article in the Journal of Education of June 1849, "Does Public sentiment in favour of Popular Education increase in Upper Canada?"[70] He admitted that people wanted education but claimed that the inhabitants of many school sections believed "that, if left to themselves, they could get [sic] up better schools for the same money".[71]

Dissatisfaction with systems of education provided by public bodies, school boards, provincial, federal and national governments, is a phenomenon in no way confined to Ryerson's period. The many experiments of the late twentieth century both within and outside "the system", are indicative of a continuing unhappiness on the part of many people with systems of education. In some areas, there is concern on the part of large governmental bodies over the number of parents who, in the mid-1970s, are choosing to send their children to private schools rather than to public schools, where, it seems, the individual and his needs become swamped by economic and political demands for homogeneity. More private schools are being established to meet religious or other particular demands of groups of parents.

In 1847 Gore District Council expressed the opinion that money saved by reducing the upper levels of the administrative hierarchy could be used to improve the situation in the school

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70. Ibid., (June 1849), p. 88-9.

71. Letter, Globe, 19 July 1849, p. 135.

room. The Council estimated that £4,000 was required each year to pay the Provincial Superintendent, his Clerk and District Superintendents. This money would be more profitably employed in the payment of Common School Teachers".[72] It will be recalled that the Council, in the same document, declared that it saw no reason to employ other than broken down people or newly arrived immigrants as teachers.

Gore District Council would, in all probability, have preferred there to be no highly placed administrative officials at all, but their comment about the cost of the educational bureaucracy is another which has its echoes in the late twentieth century. As the costs of schooling increase rapidly, more questions are being asked about the value obtained and doubts are expressed concerning the necessity for ever-growing bureaucratic supervisory or advisory bodies. These seem to flourish while governments show reluctance to pay for additional teachers whose presence might help improve the standards of instruction.

Ten years after the comment of Gore District Council, George A. Barber, the Local Superintendent of Schools for the City of Toronto, claimed that "the results of the Free School System, as at present carried on in this City, are altogether incommensurate with the cost of maintaining it." He said that those attending the schools were but a small proportion of the

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72. Gore District Council Memorial to the Legislature against the Common School Act of 1846, 1847, Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 115.

children of school age in the City, that attendance was irregular, and he concluded that it was inconsistent to have voluntary attendance and compulsory taxation.[73] Ryerson's theory, as has been described above, was that parental pride would be the cause of full and regular attendance. Obviously, Barber thought differently.

An unnamed correspondent to the Dundas Warder, writing in July 1847, and quoted by Hodgins because of his "air of candour", saw a situation which, half a century later, he might have called Gilbertian. He claimed that money destined for the Normal and Model Schools was deducted from the Common School Fund before the latter was apportioned by the Chief Superintendent. This was according to the provisions of the Act of 1846. The correspondent summed up the situation in these words: "Hence it is evident, that everyone who is now a Teacher, and avails himself of these Institutions, pays a part, indirectly, and those who cannot avail themselves of the said gratuitous instruction, are made to pay for the education of others, to supplant themselves.[74]

It was in his Draft for a Common School Bill of 1846 that Ryerson proposed the imposition of a general tax upon the inhabitants of each school section according to property. He

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73. Report of the Local Superintendent of Schools for the City of Toronto, 1857, Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, I, p. 30.

74. Letter, Dundas Warder, July 1847, Hodgins, Doc. Hist. VII, p. 200.

explained his attitudes in the following words: "It is the inhabitants generally who elect the Trustees; it is for the inhabitants generally that the grant is made; and the same principle, I think, ought to be acted upon throughout the entire School System, -- all having a right to avail themselves of the School."[75]

As has already been stated, the relevant clause of the Bill, although strongly supported by the Attorney-General, was lost in the Legislative Assembly by a small majority, but Ryerson did not accept defeat and followed his usual pattern of educating the public and local officials to his way of thinking, by means of circulars, articles and discourses. In October 1846, almost coincident with the passage of the Bill from which the clause regarding an education tax on property was removed, Ryerson directed a circular to District Municipal Councils urging them to consider a property tax system as a means of financing schooling.[76]

A circular to Wardens of Districts, dated 14 January 1848, explains benefits which Ryerson felt would arise from such a tax. When every man must pay towards the cost of education according to property "which he has acquired and enjoys in the Country", Ryerson believed that the temptation would be removed from parents to keep their children from school in order to avoid paying fees; contention between parents, Trustees and

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75. "Draft Common School Bill for Upper Canada, 1846", ibid., VI, p. 76.

76. Circular to District Municipal Councils, October 1846, ibid., VI, p. 264.

teachers would be removed; teachers' salaries would be ensured and universal education would be made possible.[77]

A little later, Ryerson directed an Address to the Inhabitants of Upper Canada on the System of Free Schools and in this gave further reasons for the imposition of a property tax. Somewhat characteristically, he began with the fact that such a system had worked well elsewhere and gave several examples from the United States to support this claim. He went on to refer to "its cheapness to parents educating their children" and said that schools would be better since all would be equal in support of them. Wealthy and highly instructed parents would feel themselves identified with the school as much as the poor and less instructed, with the result that standards would be forced up to provide schools fit for the education of children of the former.[78]

In this respect, Ryerson warned Trustees that when a free school was established, it would be the Trustees' duty to see that a thoroughly competent teacher was appointed, since all owners of property were being taxed to pay for him. They should be given good value for their money.[79]

Ryerson felt that his proposal for a property tax was of great social and historic significance. Addressing the

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77. Circular to Wardens of Districts, 14 January 1848, Journal of Education, (January 1848), p. 4-16.

78. Ibid., (January 1849), p. 1-5.

79. Circular to Trustees, 12 August 1850, ibid., (August 1850), p. 119.

Heads of City and Town Corporations, he summed up the effects of the tax: "Thus the children of the poor man who pays his assessment of a few pence will have equal access to the means of Education with those of the rich man who pays his assessment of twenty shillings; and thus, for the first time in the history of our country, will the School education of the poorest classes be provided for in Cities and Towns. This is one of the most noble and patriotic measures that ever received the sanction of the Canadian Legislature."[80] This was after the passage in 1847 of the Act for Amending the Upper Canada Common School Act of 1846 which permitted municipal authorities to impose a tax "over and above the assessment which they are now authorized by law to impose."[81]

Ryerson did not agree with those critics who felt that the link between parents and teacher would be lost; he believed that a general tax would involve everybody in education. His firm belief in equality gave him little sympathy with the view that only parents should be required to pay for the education of their children and he saw the practical impossibility of universal education if such a principle obtained, for he considered it apparent that many parents kept children away from school to avoid paying fees.

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80. Circular to Heads of City and Town Corporations, 15 January 1848, ibid., (January 1848), p. 21.

81. 10th and 11th Victoria, Chapter XIX.

Support for Ryerson's scheme of free schooling and for the use of a tax on property to finance it came in some cases immediately and in others more gradually as beneficial results became apparent. Finding opposition in his district to the School Tax, the Warden of Dalhousie District, Hamnett Pinney, headed a subscription list himself. He remarked, in a letter to Ryerson, "the contribution was ample, -- even generous, but I found, as other Councillors had found, that the sum subscribed was chiefly from those who had no further interest in the question, than, that of educating other people's children."[82] It would seem that the people of Dalhousie District were not imbued with the feeling expressed elsewhere that the full cost of education should be borne by parents, though the idea of compulsion in a school tax would appear to have offended them.

Niagara Township was one of the first authorities to make use of a tax on property, and was, indeed, the only town to do so in 1848, one Trustee having refused to serve unless that method of paying for the school were adopted.[83] According to the Journal of Education, the result was that "the number of pupils in the School more than doubled".[84]

The reports of many District Superintendents for the

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82. Letter, 7 February 1847, Hodgins, op. cit., VII p. 129.

83. Report of Chief Superintendent of Education for 1848, ibid., VIII, p. 104.

84. Editorial Comment, "Example of the Free School System", Journal of Education, (May 1848) p. 156.

year 1848 indicated support for the property tax[85] and even Gore District Superintendent, P. Thornton, whose District Council had expressed strong opposition to Ryerson's proposals, reported "considerable advances" in 1848.[86] Home District Council indirectly supported the equitable distribution of charges by the property tax in raising objections to the system of rate-bills to parents of children actually attending the schools, "so that it may, and often does happen, that a small portion of the inhabitants of a School Section are heavily taxed for the benefit of the whole".[87]

Opposition to the general tax on property gradually diminished partly as people saw beneficial results and partly as they became accustomed to its existence. Simcoe District Superintendent, Henry A. Clifford, summed up the situation in 1848: "The novelty of such a tax has now worn off, and the improbability of its being abolished having become apparent to all, less dissatisfaction and less opposition are now offered to its collection."[88] There is an air of resignation about Mr. Clifford's remarks. Ryerson did not need to resort to the "Prussian" methods of which he was accused when he was able gently to introduce and urge the adoption of each of his measures so that, when the "improbability of its being abolished"

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85. Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 96-103.

86. Report of Gore District Superintendent for 1848, ibid., VIII, p. 98.

87. Home District Council Report on the Common School Act, 1846, 1848, ibid., VII, p. 122.

88. Report of the District Superintendent of Simcoe, 1848, ibid., VIII, p. 98.

became apparent, people would accept it as part of the way of life.

In his Report for 1849, Ryerson claimed, "In many parts of the Province, the principle of poll-tax, (or Rate-Bill) upon children attending School, is falling into disrepute", while he maintained that the system of taxing property was becoming prevalent.[89]

After the "vigorous and well-sustained discussion", referred to earlier, which led to the re-opening of schools under a free system supported by general taxation, Toronto City Council began to make good progress in the field of education. Immediately, in 1850, three schools were built and three more were begun in 1853. By 1910, it was possible for J.L. Hughes, by then Chief Inspector of Toronto to claim, "The number has increased to sixty-six, several of which contain individually more classrooms than did the first three".[90]

The process of conversion continued as School Conventions, held in January, February and March, 1853, made resolutions calling for the establishment of free schools dependent on taxation. Out of a total of 21 such resolutions, that of the County of Prince Edward may be considered typical: "Resolved, -- That this Con-

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89. Report of Chief Superintendent of Education for 1848, ibid., VIII, p. 282.

90. J.L. Hughes, "Sketch of the Establishment of the Toronto Public Schools, 1844", Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, I, p. 23-4.

vention recognizes the soundness of the principle that the property of the Province should educate the youth of the Province, on the ground that the benefit derived from general education is enjoyed by the whole community; . . . ," and it went on to urge compulsion so that full benefit might be obtained. Several resolutions demanded that the property tax be enforced by law.[91] Ryerson's plans were obviously approved by the teachers and others who attended the Conventions but those who sought the forceful backing of the law lacked Ryerson's firm and apparently justified belief in the power of persuasion.

Hodgins commented in 1854 that the development of the education system was proceeding satisfactorily and that the "sympathies and enthusiasm" of the people had been enlisted in its successful operation.[92] One must take Hodgins' appraisal with a degree of caution, since he was such a devoted admirer of Ryerson, but there seems sufficient evidence elsewhere to indicate that gradually opposition to the free school system was overcome and adverse criticism was proved unworthy of being heeded. An historian, J. Donald Wilson, claims that by 1870, 4,244 of the 4,400 school sections in Upper Canada had voluntarily accepted the local school tax assessment, the ground having been satisfactorily prepared for legalisation of the procedure in

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91. Hodgins, Doc. Hist., XI, p. 54-5.

92. Ibid., XI, p. 236.

1871.[93]

Attitudes were changing in Ryerson's favour and, as Ryerson put it in 1852, "the youth of all classes have equal access to the advantages of the Schools".[94] In 1855, he published A General Statistical Abstract showing the development of the education system from 1842 to 1854.[95] When he took office in 1844 there were reported 2,610 Common Schools in operation. By 1854, the number had increased to 3,244, a rise of 24.29%. No figures are given for free schools until 1850, when 252 were reported in operation. The growth then is remarkable. In 1851, 855 were reported, and the number rose steadily to 1,177 in 1854. In the four years, free schools had increased by 367%, against the rise in Common Schools in general of 24.29% spread over a decade.

If the number of schools reported as having changed to the free school system is compared with the number of Common Schools reported in operation, it will be seen that those who were opposed to free schools were steadily being overcome. The following table, using figures from the General Statistical Abstract, referred to above, will further illustrate the growth of free schools from 1850 to 1854, the end of Ryerson's first

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93. J. Donald Wilson, "The Ryerson Years in Canada West", J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp, and Louis-Philippe Audet, Canadian Education: A History, (Scarborough, Ont., Prentice-Hall of Canada, Ltd., 1970), p. 214-239.

94. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1852, Hodgins, op. cit., X, p. 294.

95. Ibid., XI, p. 228-9.

decade in office.

TABLE C.

The growth of free schools shown as a proportion of Common Schools, 1850 - 1854

Year	No. of Free Schools	Total No. of Common Schools	Free Schools as a %age of Common Schools
1850	252	3,059	8.24%
1851	855	3,001	28.49%
1852	901	3,010	29.93%
1853	1,052	3,133	33.58%
1854	1,177	3,244	36.28%

It is clear that free schools formed an increasingly large proportion of the total number of common schools in operation in Upper Canada, so that by 1854, over a third of the common schools were free.

As we have seen, Ryerson's critics maintained that nothing is valued unless paid for and therefore, the introduction of a free school system would devalue education in the eyes of parents of whom many were already quite reluctant to send their children to school. Ryerson countered this by claiming that free schools would remove the obstacle of school fees which, in his opinion, was the cause of many children being kept from school.

It would seem, therefore, that if Ryerson was right, the rapid introduction of free schools in the period from 1850 to 1854 would have resulted in an equally dramatic increase in the proportion of children of school age attending school. If, on the other hand, there is no great increase in such proportion, it could be argued that Ryerson's critics were right to believe that free schooling does not necessarily lead to voluntary attendance in school.

Again using figures from A General Statistical Abstract of 1855, the following table illustrates the situation during the period from 1850 to 1854.

TABLE D.

Increase in numbers of children attending school, 1850 - 1854

Season and Year	No. of children of School Age (5-16) in population of Upper Canada	Net Average Attendance of Pupils at Common Schools	%age of School Population contained in Net Average Attendance
Summer 1850	259,258	76,842	29.64%
Winter 1850	259,258	81,469	31.42%
Summer 1854	277,912	91,880	33.06%
Winter 1854	277,912	92,925	33.44%

The table shows that over the period from 1850 to 1854, the summer attendance rose from 29.64% of the children of school

age in Upper Canada to 33.06%, an increase of 3.42%. Similarly, the winter attendance rose from 31.42% to 33.44%, an increase of 2.02%. This does not represent a great increase in the proportion of children attending school after the introduction of free schooling in the system, though it must be stressed that the figures do show an increase.

Perhaps more noteworthy is the fact that the figures for summer attendance show a more rapid increase than those for the winter attendance. It will be seen that school attendance in winter was higher than in summer since, particularly in rural communities, children were needed to work on the land during the good months of summer. Time could more easily be afforded for schooling during the winter months. Schools, it should be noted, were open generally for the whole year. The greater increase in attendance for the summer months suggests that more parents were willing to release their children to attend school, an indication that they were becoming more conscious of the desirability of schooling, as Ryerson believed they would.

It would seem, then, that Ryerson's advocacy of free schools and of the property tax as the principal method of financing them was beginning to prevail over the adverse comments of his critics. The evidence from the information given in the General Statistical Abstract seems to be that an increasing number of local authorities were turning to free schooling and

that there was increasing support for the generalised system of taxation.

Yet, the very people for whom the free schools were intended -- children and impoverished parents -- were not generally showing such enthusiasm in filling the schools as is suggested by the reports of a number of District Superintendents and by selected figures quoted by Ryerson. Progress was being made towards Ryerson's aim of compulsory, free and universal schooling supported by general taxation but, by the end of Ryerson's first decade in office, it was not, perhaps, as rapid as he believed.

There were strong criticisms of Ryerson's plans in this respect and there was strong feeling that it was not right to expect education to be paid for by people who were not parents of school children. Ryerson believed that he could overcome criticism and opposition by persuasion and argument, and to a considerable extent he was right, but it must be remembered that when free and universal schooling in Upper Canada was finally sanctioned by law in 1871, the Act also contained powers of compulsion to ensure that all children were placed in school. This suggests that critics who claimed that nothing is valued unless it is paid for may have been justified in their comments. Other critics maintained that the rupture of the personal contact between parents and teacher, created by the payment of fees, would lead to less efficient work by the teachers whom a free

system would make answerable to no-one. Ryerson, on the other hand, felt that standards would rise once everyone was forced financially to take an interest in education.

Ryerson believed that he was right to seek free, compulsory and universal education and paid no attention to those who thought otherwise. He intended, however, that, although it was provided without direct payment, the system of teaching should be by well-qualified personnel, using the best methods and equipment, and in suitable surroundings. The next chapter will consider these aspects of pedagogy during the first decade of Ryerson's term of office.

CHAPTER IV

PEDAGOGY - TEACHERS, METHODS, TEXTBOOKS, BUILDINGS

It has been shown that the aspects of Ryerson's work which drew most criticism during his first decade in office as Chief Superintendent of Education were the presentation of his philosophy of education, particularly in regard to providing a Christian education in preparation for life, citizenship and employment; his attempt to involve the community in the education system while yet maintaining centralised control, and his introduction of free education based on a system of general taxation.

There was, however, very little adverse criticism of Ryerson's work to improve the quality of the aspects of education most closely affecting the pupils -- the quality of teachers, the methods and textbooks they used, and the buildings in which they taught. Adverse criticism there was concerning these matters but little of it was directed towards Ryerson. Whereas people could find fault with his philosophy of education, his system of control, his method of financing education, few, if any, could disagree with the need to raise the standard of teachers, the tools of their trade and the places where they

worked. It was generally agreed that improvement was needed in these areas.

This chapter will consider the criticism of the pedagogical situation, and attempt to assess Ryerson's reaction to it. The study will deal with the status of teachers, the training of teachers in Model and Normal Schools, the provision of suitable and standardised textbooks and the need for improved school rooms and buildings.

1. Ryerson and the Status of Teachers.

Before his appointment as Chief Superintendent of Education, Ryerson referred, in an address published in the British Colonist, to his desire "of raising a wretched employment to an honourable profession".[1] He saw the rôle of teachers as being of supreme importance for, in a circular addressed to teachers in 1850, he asked rhetorically, "What is the teacher's work?" and gave himself the answer, "It is ... to form the character of the future citizens, Magistrates and Rulers of our land! It is to teach and implant that which is the only true guarantee of liberty, order, and social stability."[2] In view of this

1. Egerton Ryerson, "Introductory Address" to his defence of Sir Charles Metcalfe, The British Colonist, Toronto, 31 May 1844, no page number.

2. "Circular to the Teacher of each Common School in Upper Canada on his duty under the new Common School Act of 1850", 14 August 1850, Hodgins, J. George, Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada, Vol IX (Toronto, L.K. Cameron, 1894-1910), p. 216.

responsibility, teachers must be chosen and prepared with care. "No intemperate, or profane, person should be intrusted [sic] with the instruction of youth."[3] Ryerson saw that teachers were of great importance to society and to the nation but other eyes did not have the same view.

In the early years of Ryerson's incumbency, the status of teachers was very low. The nadir was probably the view expressed in the Memorial of Gore District Council referred to earlier, when it was made clear that teachers should be chosen from people of decaying energies or from those seeking temporary support "until their character and ability are known and turned to better account for themselves." Men of the calibre sought for entry into Normal School could, in the opinion of the Memorialists, find easier and more profitable employment "than in the drudgery of a Common School".[4]

It is not surprising that the Gore District Teachers' Association condemned the views of the Memorial, calling them "at once, degrading to professional Teachers, and detrimental to the cause of Education", both of which they clearly were.[5] Yet, then, as perhaps now, there was little general appreciation of the potential value to society of a teacher.

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3. "Forms and Regulations", 1846, ibid., VI, p. 303.

4. Gore District Council Memorial to the Legislature against the Common School Act of 1846, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 115.

5. Resolution of Gore District Teachers' Association, 29 January 1847, ibid., VII, p. 199.

William Elliott, "the efficient Superintendent of Schools for the London District",[6] spoke to Municipal Councillors on the discrepancy between what was expected of a teacher and what was given to him. "In the first place, a Teacher was supposed to be a person of unblemished character. In the next, he was expected to be able to teach everything! And what was he to get? -- from ten to sixteen dollars a month!" A married man was given poor accommodation, an unmarried man was expected to "board round, . . . exposed to all the annoyance of that most pernicious practice".[7]

As we shall see, it was Ryerson's aim to raise the status of teachers in the public esteem, one method being to improve their professional qualifications.

During most of Ryerson's first decade in office, it was usually the practice of the Globe to oppose or condemn education matters with which Ryerson was connected, but, on the subject of the training and improvement of teachers, the paper spoke strongly in support of the teachers who "have generally been the most neglected and worst used class of the community in this respect."[8] A later editorial in that paper spoke out on behalf of teachers, who found themselves out of a job because Trustees had found some-

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6. Comment by J. George Hodgins, ibid., VII, p. 130.

7. Speech, 1 February 1848, ibid., VII, p. 130.

8. Editorial, The Globe, Toronto, 14 October 1848, p. 330.

one willing to work for a few months at a lower rate of pay, a situation which did little for a teacher's prestige.[9]

The legal status of teachers was often most precarious. Hodgins refers to Hamilton City Schools as being typical of those in the province and reports that, in 1847, there were six teachers in the Common Schools of the City, of whom none was under regular articles of agreement.[10] Teachers could be, and were often dismissed with little or no notice on the flimsiest of pretexts.

An occupation with what has come to be called a low profile, was not likely to attract many people of high quality and some idea of the quality of many teachers may be obtained from Ryerson's own request that the profession be "purged of every inebriate, every blasphemer, every ignorant idler, who cannot teach and will not learn".[11]

At first, almost anyone could, it seems, obtain a certificate to teach and since the certificate could be granted by a School Visitor, who, as was shown in an earlier chapter, might have little learning or knowledge of the process of pedagogy himself, it is not surprising that certificates were granted to the most unsuitable people. In his Report to the Gore District

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9. Editorial, ibid., 9 December 1848, p. 394.

10. J. George Hodgins, Schools and Colleges in Ontario 1792-1910, Vol I, (Toronto, King's Printer, 1910), p. 70.

11. "Circular to the Teacher of each Common School in Upper Canada on his duty under the new Common School Act of 1850", 14 August 1850, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., IX, p. 217.

Council in 1849, the Local Superintendent, P. Thornton, commented on this matter, "I am sorry to say that some of the most ignorant men, (in the character of Teachers,) during the time of my Superintendency have, in the course of the present year, obtained Certificates of Qualification from School Visitors."[12] It should be noted that this was the district where, as we have seen, teachers of the lowest social stature were deliberately employed.

Hodgins quotes the minimum qualifications which were expected of teachers in 1850. The academic learning required was low and little knowledge of pedagogy was expected. Principally, they were expected to have purely factual knowledge of English and mathematics and "some knowledge" of school organisation. Only the First Class Teacher was required "to understand . . . the improved Methods of Teaching".[13]

The examination to which one intending teacher had to submit in 1850 is described in Hodgins' collection of reminiscences of superannuated school teachers. Joseph Drummond, who was engaged in September 1850 to teach in Colchester Township in the County of Essex, recalled, "Before commencing, I had to pass an examination by the Local Superintendent, which was as follows:-- 'What is your name? How old are you? -- I don't need to ask your nationality, -- I know you are Scotch. -- How far have you

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12. Ibid., VIII, p. 268.

13. Ibid., IX, p. 220 - 1.

been in Arithmetic? Write your name.' I did so; he seemed pleased with the writing, and said that I would do, and gave me a Certificate."[14] The style of writing of the teacher concerned suggests that he would have succeeded in a more rigorous examination but most teachers appointed following an examination of the kind described could have done little to enhance the profession or improve the attitude of the public towards it.

Even after a quarter of a century of work by Ryerson in seeking to improve the status and qualifications of teachers, the situation in fact was far from satisfactory. The Inspector of Public Schools for East Bruce, R.V. Langdon, commented in 1872 on a 66.7% failure rate in an examination for Teachers' Certificates. It must be admitted, of course, that such a failure rate indicated that the desired standard of teachers had been raised considerably over that shown in the examination of 1850. According to the Inspector, "The majority of failures were in the subjects of Spelling, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and English Grammar," unfortunately the very basic subjects of the curriculum.[15]

Teaching tended to be confined to following step by step what was printed in a textbook. Many of these followed the Platonic interrogative system whereby information was presented in the course of imaginary conversations wherein the interrogator

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14. "Reminiscences of Superannuated School Teachers 1850-51", ibid., IX, p. 298.

15. Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, II, p. 128.

posed exactly the right questions to produce the desired answers. The County Superintendent for the Gore District, P. Thornton, has been quoted earlier in his denunciation of teachers and parents who calculated a child's progress by the number of books worked through in a given time.[16]

As there was little opportunity for a teacher to obtain professional training and guidance, especially if the school was in a remote area, inspectors were able to comment as one did about a school in North Hastings, "The Teacher is ambitious to have a reputation for success, and is enthusiastic in her work. Possessed of a limited education, she has not, of course, the most approved methods. In common with too great a proportion of her fellow Teachers in more favoured districts, she has failed in some respects, to learn what the elements of the best teaching are." This comment was made in 1875, many years after Ryerson had founded the Normal School in Toronto, but, for the teacher concerned, Toronto might as well have been on the other side of the earth.[17]

Some teachers did not want to improve themselves. An extract from the Report for 1849 of the Superintendent of Common Schools for the Township of Etobicoke was published in the

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16. P. Thornton, Address on Education reported in Globe, 29 July 1845, page number indecipherable.

17. "Visits to Schools in New Townships", Hodgins, op. cit., II, p. 74-5.

Journal of Education. Etobicoke is not too distant from Toronto, but the Superintendent wrote, "I regret to state, that to an extremely limited extent have the schools of Etobicoke profited by their proximity to the Normal and Model Schools at Toronto." Having visited both he vowed to make the Toronto Model School the ideal for Etobicoke schools.[18] The Globe had urged teachers in 1847 to form self-improving societies and had recommended the publication of a monthly or semi-monthly journal for teachers, an aim which, as we have seen earlier, Ryerson had already formed and which took shape in the founding of the Journal of Education in 1848.[19]

It is not easy to say whether a preponderance of poor teachers led to poor salaries or whether the cause and effect realtionship was the other way round. The Globe was inclined to think that a cause of the problem of insufficient teachers of good qualifications was the poor salary offered. There was, it claimed in an editorial, no inducement for young men to become teachers "when three or four times the remuneration is given to a clerk". In addition, it pointed out, they were required to pledge to continue in the teaching profession after they were trained. Since many had been sponsored by Districts which paid at least part of their expenses, and they received the grant of 4/- per week, referred to earlier, it was perhaps reasonable

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18. Egerton Ryerson, (ed.), Journal of Education, Toronto, (May 1850), p. 77-8.

19. Editorial, Globe, 3 February 1847, p. 38.

that they should be expected to guarantee some return for the expense of public money on their behalf.[20] The Globe's solution was to enlarge school sections and thereby reduce the number of schools by half. The Government appropriation for Common Schools could then be increased so that a decent salary could be paid to the smaller number of qualified teachers.[21] Some months previously, Ryerson had commented unfavourably, in a circular to District Municipal Councils, on the tendency of local authorities to form small school sections. The reason, he had said, was that "each Parent is anxious to have the School-House as close to his own door as possible".[22] The Globe's suggestion to enable teachers' salaries to be improved did not take into account this attitude of some parents nor did it consider the possibility that an enlarged school section covering, perhaps, two communities might necessitate some children walking intolerable distances to school, or lead to some who otherwise might have attended school, being prevented from enrolling.

The Globe persisted in campaigning for a smaller number of schools so that more money would be available for teachers. In August 1849, an editorial commented on aspects of a "Report

20. J. Harold Putman, Egerton Ryerson and Education in Upper Canada, (Toronto, Wm Briggs, 1912), p. 233.

21. Editorial, Globe, 13 January 1847, p. 2.

22. Circular to District Municipal Councils, October 1846, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., VI, p. 262.

on Canadian Schools", Ryerson's Report for 1848. "It will be seen that although the pupils are nearly doubled since 1842, the schools have not increased in the same proportion, which we consider very desirable, for the indefinite multiplication of schools necessarily reduces the means for supporting teachers so low as to prevent suitable people being employed." The writer of the editorial calculated that each teacher on average could have received £27 in 1848, though, in fact, this amount would have been reduced because of uncollected fees. He considered £ 27 "a starvation allowance" which "will not pay for respectable board. A common labourer will earn double the amount, and a good mechanic three times." The average of 41 pupils per teacher should be raised to between 55 and 60, "and every justice done to the pupils", so that the number of teachers needed would be reduced and their salaries raised.[23]

One may smile wryly, in passing at the contrast between 1848, when an increase in the pupil-teacher ratio was felt desirable to improve the lot of teachers, and 1976, when agitation is growing for action in the opposite direction for a similar purpose.

It is interesting to note that, although the Globe editorial uses the forceful language with which George Brown was wont to attack Ryerson and his policies, the tone is of someone

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23. Editorial, Globe, 11 August 1849, p. 274.

seeking to improve the situation rather than merely to find fault, which one feels was often the case in editorials in that paper at that time. Not once, throughout the long editorial, is Ryerson's name mentioned, although the subject is his Report for 1848. This could, of course, be viewed as a snub, a technique sometimes used by the editor, but it was more common for him to attack boldly. Ryerson's policies in this area were not such as to draw opposition or adverse criticism.

The reference in the Globe editorial, mentioned above, to a teacher's salary being reduced because of uncollected fees was no idle remark. Superannuated Common School Teachers reminisced to J. George Hodgins about trustees who put the onus of collecting the Rate Bill payments on the teacher so that the balance of his salary might be paid. Sometimes after repeated efforts at collection, he would receive payment in kind -- a quantity of pork or potatoes. Some wrote of teachers depending on the services of money-lenders to tide them over until they could next obtain payment.[24] In his Explanatory Remarks to a Draft Common School Bill of February 1849, Ryerson referred to many Trustees refusing to collect debts from Rate Bills of the previous year and he commented that it was hard on the Teachers.[25] The Draft Bill contained a clause making the Trustees personally

24. "Reminiscences of Superannuated Common School Teachers, 1847-8", Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 284-7.

25. Ibid., VIII, p. 215.

responsible for the teacher's pay, in an attempt to improve the position of teachers in this respect.[26]

Criticism there was of the status, qualifications and pay of teachers but none of it was directed towards Ryerson and his policies because he, too, was dissatisfied with the state of affairs concerning these matters. He intended to take steps to raise the status and qualifications of teachers and thereby encourage the public to accept the desirability of paying them more. Commenting on the Upper Canada Education System, the Chief Superintendent of Education for Lower Canada, Jean-Baptiste Meilleur, said curtly that if the people "wish for able Teachers they must pay them suitably, as they pay able Lawyers and Physicians".[27] His view of the equal importance to society of teachers, lawyers and physicians is one which was obviously accorded as little public sympathy in the middle of the nineteenth century as it is today.

In his great Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada of 1846, Ryerson said that he wanted teaching elevated to the status of a profession so that people would enter it for life,[28] and this desire was behind all his moves towards the improvement of teachers and teaching.

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26. Draft Common School Bill, 1849, para. xix, ibid., VIII, p. 220.

27. Ibid., VIII, p. 60.

28. Ibid., VI, p. 199.

Reference has already been made to his wish to see that intemperate or profane people were not appointed teachers and in his Chief Superintendent's Report for 1855, he stressed that it was essential that teachers in Upper Canada should be of "good moral character".[29]

In an unsigned article, the writer, presumably Ryerson, reminded Trustees of the requisites for keeping a good teacher: they were "to pay, to respect, and to co-operate with him".[30] For many, as we have seen, this must have been a novel attitude for it is apparent from the treatment many teachers received that, although Trustees accepted some responsibility for paying the teacher, there were many cases where they evidently neither respected him nor cooperated with him. In March 1848, the Journal of Education published a prize-winning essay by John Lalor Esq. entitled "Respect for School Teachers the Interest of Society", Ryerson, the editor, obviously considering that this was a point that should be made.[31]

Teachers must be worthy of respect and Ryerson wanted to see a uniform and more efficient method of examining and classifying teachers. This he considered "a desideratum in the School Law". He felt that, by this means, a certificate could

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29. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1855, ibid., XI, p. 284-299.

30. "Powers of the Superintendents of Schools in the United States and in Upper Canada", Journal of Education, (March 1848), p. 65-79.

31. Ibid., (March 1848), p. 79-80.

no longer be given to an applicant "who begs for it as the only means of obtaining subsistence". Teachers would also be encouraged as they would feel that they were being judged "according to their actual merits and by a common standard".[32]

In his Chief Superintendent's Report for 1847, Ryerson had urged that District Councils should set up local Boards of Examiners to deal with the examination and certification of teachers. This, he had said, "would give uniformity and elevation to the standard of School Teaching in each District, and throughout the Province".[33] As the Normal School gained in stature, Ryerson proposed that the School Bill of 1849 should give authority to the Chief Superintendent and the Masters of the Normal School to award Provincial Certificates of Qualification as Teachers to successful students of the Normal School.[34]

An important step towards elevating the standard of teachers was to ensure that they understood and applied good teaching methods in their work. Ryerson had, himself, taught in school during his youth, with, in his own words, "some degree of reputed success", and was aware of the changes in attitude to teaching methods. He noted that teaching was frequently

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32. Explanation of the provisions of the proposed School Bill, 1849, Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 90-91.

33. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 155.

34. Proposed School Bill, 1849, Sec. xvii, ibid., VIII, p. 214.

done by the old methods but pointed out that the method and organisation which would have been applauded in his youth "ought not to be tolerated now".[35]

Ryerson, therefore, embarked on a process of education for existing teachers, making suggestions and giving examples of lively and stimulating ways of approaching the various school subjects. It is interesting to note that, after a century and a quarter of change and innovation in school teaching, much of what Ryerson had to suggest makes very good sense today. A retired teacher, D. Young Hoyt, looking back, in 1896, on his early days in the profession, referred to the method introduced by Ryerson as "one of the most important adopted by the early settlers of Ontario".[36]

Ryerson believed that textbooks, which generally had been the principal teaching agent, were simply an adjunct to the process of teaching. He referred to the knowledge obtained from a textbook as "the least important view of the subject" -- even, today, a refreshing attitude towards teaching method! It should never be forgotten, he stressed, that "it is the Teacher that makes the School".[37]

An arithmetic textbook was unnecessary, in Ryerson's view. He said that if a teacher could not teach and illustrate

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35. Circular to Local Superintendents concerning the Education Act of 1850, 12 August 1850, Journal of Education, (August 1850), p. 117-9.

36. Hodgins, op. cit., V, p. 275-6.

37. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1849, ibid., VIII, p. 276.

the principles and rules of arithmetic without reference to a particular textbook, "very little of the science of numbers will be learned in his School."[38]

Contrary to generally held views of his time, Ryerson believed that teaching should progress from the familiar to the unfamiliar. In his Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, in which he expounded at some length his views on the teaching of a variety of subjects, Ryerson illustrated his attitude to method in writing about the way in which Geography should be taught. The teacher should begin with the immediate environment and work outwards. "The pupil commences his geographical tour from the very School-house in which he is learning."[39]

The rote learning of lists of words from spellers, a practice commonly found in schools of the mid-nineteenth century, was described by Ryerson as "senseless drudgery". Words, he said, should be learned as they were encountered. "What is more obvious than that the meaning of words can be most easily and appropriately learned by children, as they require to use them, or as they find them in the course of reading, where their practical application is witnessed at the same time that their meaning is acquired?"[40]

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38. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 163.

39. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, ibid., VI, p. 183.

40. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 162.

Ryerson condemned the alphabetical method of teaching reading. "Is this rational?" he asked. "Is it not calculated to deaden rather than quicken the intellectual faculties?" Showing an awareness, none too common at the time, of the child as an individual, Ryerson recommended that words be copied on to a slate since, for the child, "the love of imitation peculiar to his age is gratified, and his imitative faculty is improved." With perhaps, an excessive degree of optimism, Ryerson commented, "Learning is a pleasure, and the task an amusement."[41]

Ryerson was an early advocate of visual aids in teaching. "What children see, they learn quicker, understand better, and retain longer, than what they only hear, or read," he wrote in his Report for 1853.[42] He sought, therefore, to provide his schools with maps, charts and other apparatus.

Although he stressed the importance of the teacher in personal contact with his pupils, and denounced too great a reliance on a textbook, Ryerson did recommend one series of textbooks and, as will be seen, took steps to ensure their adoption in all schools of Upper Canada. This was the series of Irish National Readers and he wrote in praise of the method

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41. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, ibid., VI, p. 163.

42. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1853, ibid., XI, p. 91-2.

used in the series in an article in the Journal of Education. "Beginning with the forms and various sounds of the letters, and one syllable dialogues and little narratives so congenial to the taste of the infant mind, they proceed through the simple elements of the essential branches of useful knowledge." All these branches of knowledge were treated "in a manner both attractive and scientific, and adapted to the intercourse and pursuits of life."[43]

The establishment of the Journal of Education has already been referred to as a means of communicating new information on education matters to teachers. Articles were included on methods and theories originating not only in Canada but in the United States and in Europe. So great was the importance that Ryerson placed on this periodical that from its beginning in January 1848 until July 1850, it was run entirely at his own expense.

Teachers' Institutes had been established with some success in Germany, New England and New York and, using references to these places and quotations from the Board of Education of Massachussetts, Ryerson urged that Districts should be given financial aid to enable them to hold Teachers' Institutes for periods of between five and ten days.[44] Following

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43. Egerton Ryerson, "The Series of National Readers", Journal of Education, (November 1848), p. 337.

44. Draft School Bill, 1849, Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 219.

this, in 1850, Mr Robertson, principal of the Normal School, made a publicity tour in favour of Teachers' Institutes, and Mr. Hind a teacher at the Normal School, made a lecture tour, giving lectures on Agricultural Chemistry and, at the same time, a foretaste of the possibilities of Teachers' Institutes. According to the many reports that appeared in the Journal of Education, both speakers were favourably received.[45]

Ryerson wanted teachers to receive better remuneration and he hoped that better training of teachers would lead to an attitude whereby the public would be prepared to pay more for education.[46] "When the people have illustrations and examples of what good teaching is," Ryerson wrote in his report for 1847, "they will soon desire it, and be satisfied that it is the cheapest teaching, even at double the price of poor teaching."[47] It is interesting that Ryerson felt it necessary to emphasise the cheapness of the teaching, showing that he was fully aware of public reluctance to spend money on education.

The Legislature made a grant to local authorities, and municipal assessment was expected to produce at least an equal amount of money, all of which formed the Common School Fund. This, Ryerson emphasised in an article "The Common School Fund and its Expenditure", was for the payment of teachers' salaries

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45. See, for example, Journal of Education, (June 1850), p. 93-4.

46. Hodgins, op. cit., VI, p. 200.

47. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 157.

only. Using italics to draw attention to the final point, he wrote, "The present School Law provides that every farthing of the School Fund . . . shall be expended for one object -- and for one object only -- the salaries of legally qualified teachers."[48] Ryerson hoped that the taxation based on property, discussed in the previous chapter, would help to ensure a regular income for local authorities and so regular payment of salaries for teachers.[49] The certainty of a regular and adequate income would go a long way towards attracting to teaching a better class of person than those found in school-houses at the beginning of Ryerson's period in office.

Many teachers, themselves, possibly encouraged by Ryerson's efforts on their behalf, showed a desire to improve their status. The District Superintendent of Simcoe, Henry A. Clifford, wrote to the Warden and Council in 1848, "I frequently witnessed the great desire existing amongst many of our Teachers for the opportunity of improving themselves," and he urged the Council to send "two or three young men of good attainments" to the Normal School.[50] The writer of an editorial in the Globe, later in the same year, said that it was "truly gratifying" to know that 98 of the 126 who had attended the half-year course just ended at the Normal School,

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48. "The Common School Fund and its Expenditure", Journal of Education, (January 1848), p. 25.

49. Circular to Wardens of Districts, 14 January 1848, ibid., p. 4-16.

50. Report of Simcoe District Superintendent to the Warden and Council, 1 February 1848, ibid., (April 1848), p. 114-116.

were already employed in teaching. It was, he said, "a strong proof of the desire of improvement by Teachers".[51]

In 1854, the teachers of the County of Elgin formed themselves into an association for the purpose of self-improvement. They met three or four times a year to hear lectures on method and other pedagogical topics, and they set up a Teachers' Library and a museum which contained models of school furniture and specimens of school apparatus.[52]

It would seem that Ryerson's advocacy of new ways of considering the teaching of school subjects did much to encourage teachers. With a certain disregard for grammar and spelling, the School Superintendent of Victoria District, William Hutton, wrote, "The change from the old 'hum-drum' system to an intellectual one, have [sic] done a world of good . . . I have done as much as I possibly could to consign to disuse the unmeaning, the unintelligable [sic] and enslaving columns of the Spelling Book, and to show the proper use of those invaluable National Text Books." He considered that these textbooks of the Irish National Series encouraged the child to think for himself, an aim which, as we have seen earlier, Ryerson had in mind for his education system.[53]

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51. Editorial, Globe, 14 October 1848, p. 330.

52. Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, II, p. 136.

53. Report of the School Superintendent of Victoria District quoted in the Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1847, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., VII, p. 176.

The County Superintendent of Coburg, Edward Scarlett, who has previously been quoted as he complained of finding teachers who pushed children senselessly on from one reading book to another, simply to please fond but ignorant parents, commented later in a favourable manner on teachers who had been trained to teach reasons before giving definitions and to encourage the deduction of definitions from reasons given.[54]

In 1858, the Superintendent of Huron County, Thomas Sloan, reported on schools in three townships. "I found them," he said, "with two exceptions, in a state of improvement, the Teachers generally pursuing the interrogative and intellectual system." In "a number of schools", he found that the pupils could answer "most questions" about the meaning of what they read.[55] The qualifications reduce somewhat the impact of the Superintendent's findings, but there seems no doubt that in his county and elsewhere, the work of teachers was being done in a livelier and more interesting way.

Ryerson, himself, cannot take credit for the new approaches to method, for this was an age when an awareness was growing of the pupil as an individual, but in Upper Canada, Ryerson was responsible for the propagation and encouragement of these ideas and attitudes. Mention has already been made of his extensive

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54. Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, II, p. 106-7.

55. Ibid., II, p. 118.

suggestions in his Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada of 1846[56] and many articles on method were published in the Journal of Education, often being reprinted from American publications.[57] Ryerson's desire to produce a broadened outlook in pupils, as discussed in the first chapter, was probably a further factor in improving the quality of teaching, for teachers were called upon to teach more interesting material.

Teachers trained in the Normal School had been encouraged to make use of maps and other apparatus to illustrate their teaching but, as Hodgins pointed out, it was useless to urge such methods and then not take steps to see that schools could obtain such apparatus "at the very cheapest rates".[58] Therefore, Ryerson gained authority through the Common Schools Regulatory Act[59] of 1853, to spend up to £500 each year "in the purchase, from time to time, of books, Publications and Objects suitable for a Canadian Library and Museum", to be housed in the buildings of the Normal School.

He set off once more for Europe, where, with his 19 year old daughter, Sophia, he spent the period from 1855 to 1857 in seeking out and buying copies of paintings, statuary,

56. Hodgins, Doc. Hist., VI, p. 140-211.

57. Sylvia Carlton, Egerton Ryerson and Education in Ontario, 1844-1877, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1950), p: 75,

58. Hodgins, op. cit., X, p. 195.

59. 16th and 17th Victoria, Chapter CLXXXV, Section xxiii.

engravings and models of scientific instruments. These he had shipped back to Upper Canada and they were housed in Canada's first public museum of the fine arts whose opening Ryerson announced in 1857.

Ideally, teachers would have flocked to the Museum to improve their own education and to see what materials were available to them. Maps and other apparatus on display could then be ordered for use in the schools. Unfortunately, as has been noted earlier, it was not easy for teachers to obtain the time or the means to travel from their school sections to Toronto and, as an aid to the improvement of teaching, the Museum had limited value. However, it is greatly to Ryerson's credit that it was established and, as F.H. Johnson remarks, it was "quite astonishing" work for "a self educated educator unversed in aesthetics or art criticism, who was seeing many of the great European galleries for the first time in his mid-fifties."[60] This may be considered another example of the determination displayed by Ryerson in the pursuit of his goals.

Other means of propagating information were successful and interest in the new methods grew, so that eventually some local inspectors refused to grant certificates to teachers unless they improved their classroom presentation in accordance

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60. F. Henry Johnson, "A Colonial Canadian in Search of a Museum", Queen's Quarterly, Vol. LXXVII, No. 2, (Summer 1970), p. 217-230, and, same author, "The Fate of Canada's First Art Museum", ibid., Vol LXXVIII, No. 2, (Summer 1971), p. 241-9.

with the new approaches.[61] An outstanding case of a teacher whose genius and enthusiasm totally transformed the classroom and school was reported in an account of schools in St Thomas by James H. Coyne. The teacher, a Mr. Bigg, taught science in St. Thomas Central School in the 1850s.

> The School Apparatus consisted of Blackboards and a few Maps. Mr Bigg introduced the teaching of Science, with illustrative experiments. Parents and Pupils were interested in his proposal to supply the School with Suitable appliances. Tickets were sold by the Pupils at 25 cents each in the Village and surrounding Townships, and Lectures and Experiments in Chemistry and Electricity, then incipient Sciences, were given by him in various places in the County and elsewhere. The Education Government Depository bonus doubled the amount thus raised, and in this way, Mr Bigg succeeded in furnishing the School with a complete set of Astronomical and Geographical Maps, Geological Cabinets, an Electrical Machine, Leyden Jars, and Chemical Apparatus; and the Walls were lined with framed pictures of Animals and Birds. Scientific experiments were also given in the School. All the Boys and Girls joined hands around the room to receive electrical shocks . . . much amusement was caused. 62

Clearly, not all teachers were, or are, of the calibre of Mr. Biggs but Ryerson's work made it more likely that such persons might be found in the teaching profession. By controlling the quality of teachers, by seeking to improve their salaries and conditions of work and, most importantly, by encouraging teachers to improve their own professional education, Ryerson worked to raise the status of teachers. He met no voiced

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61. Carlton, op. cit., p. 94.

62. James H. Coyne, "The Origin, Condition and Progress of Schools in St. Thomas, 1853", Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, I, p. 189-193.

adverse criticism; indeed, comments tended to be favourable or complimentary, and the opposition he met was directed towards areas discussed in previous chapters and had only an indirect relevance to the work considered here. He was, therefore, able to proceed freely towards his aims.

We should now turn to consider in more detail the training of teachers, Ryerson's work towards uniformity of textbooks and his attempts to improve school rooms and school buildings during his first decade in office.

2. Establishment of Normal and Model Schools.

The Education Act of 1843 authorised District Councils to establish model schools where teachers might go to observe particularly proficient colleagues at work.[63] By the Education Act of 1846, a district rate of up to £200 annually was allowed to finance these establishments and it was decreed that the Principal of each District Model School should be a graduate of the Normal School as soon as this latter body had been established. This temporarily impractical provision had the merit of indicating that the Legislature supported Ryerson in his desire to raise the standard of teachers. The same act provided that all teachers should be eligible for gratuitous instruction in the District Model School.[64] In his Report for 1847, Ryerson referred to model schools as being "designed to be examples of what the Common Schools . . . ought to be,

63. 7th Victoria, Chapter XXIX, Section lvii.
64. 9th Victoria, Chapter XX, Section xxiv, xxxix, xl.

in instruction, discipline, arrangements, etcetera, and to be open, without charge, to all School Teachers."[65]

No-one seemed to find fault with this idea and, indeed, there seems to have been little public comment about the model schools. Happy were the teachers who were appointed to work in them and happy the pupils able to attend such select establishments but it would have been very difficult, and even impossible, for most ordinary teachers to reach the model schools to partake of the gratuitous instruction offered. A teacher absent from his school would receive no fees, and travel to the centre where the model school was situated, even in the same school district, would frequently have been a long, arduous and expensive undertaking.

Ryerson's best hope for the formal training of teachers was in the establishment of a Normal School to which young people could go on a full-time basis before they embarked on a teaching career.

At the end of 1844, the Globe carried an announcement that a Normal School was to be opened in Toronto under the principalship of Mr. Duncan Campbell, "lately come to this country from Glasgow".[66] In June, 1847, the same paper noticed a circular by Ryerson regarding requirements for admittance to

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65. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1847, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., VII, p. 170.

66. Globe, 10 December 1844, p. 162.

"the Normal Seminary" and added, "The Superintendent states that the School will not be opened till early in Autumn, in consequence of the non-arrival of the Master from home."[67] In fact, he resigned on 24th July 1847 because of his wife's continued illness and a successor, Mr. Robertson, was appointed.

The opening ceremony took place in Toronto on 1st November 1847 and Ryerson made a speech in which after giving a pedantic definition of the word "Normal" and its use in Europe and America, he referred to Normal Schools already in existence in Glasgow, Dublin and Albany, which all provided precedents for what he expected to be a low initial registration, since the School had opened late in the year. They suggested, however, that attendance would greatly increase thereafter, which did, in fact, happen.[68] Ryerson wrote in the Journal of Education in 1848, "The success thus far of the Provincial Normal School has exceeded the expectations of its founders. The number of Students already in January exceeding forty. Now there are fifty in attendance."[69] There had been thirty students in the first term.[70]

The Globe gave half-hearted approval of Ryerson's intention to set up a Normal School, which, in view of its

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67. Editorial, ibid., 30 June 1847, p. 207.

68. Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 97-100.

69. Journal of Education, (February 1848), p. 59.

70. Letter, Ryerson to the Board of National Education in Ireland, 18 December 1847, Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 103.

policy around 1847 of finding fault with anything connected with the name of Ryerson, might well be interpreted as complete approval.

As maybe expected from the body with such decided views on teaching being an occupation for the lowest grades of people, Gore District Council was opposed to the establishment of a Normal School, considering it entirely unsuited to a country like Canada.[71] Some quarters of the population also were opposed to the Normal School. Pamphlets signed by one Angus Dallus of Toronto contained claims such as the one that teachers from Normal School went out into the country with a mistaken idea of their own importance, seldom remaining in one school longer than twelve months and "soon contaminate the minds of the older pupils . . . by their doctrines of enlightened citizenship; and thus these pupils soon learn to disdain honest labour."[72]

Obviously, there was some opposition to the Normal School, though it would seem to have been mainly of an extreme kind, not to be taken too seriously. According to Putman, there could have been criticism of the content of the course given in the Normal School for, in spite of the intention to concentrate on professional training, "grammar and mathematics received much greater attention than their importance merited" and the methods used in the teaching contained much repetition and rote-learning, both of which had received unfavourable notice from Ryerson in

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71. Herbert Thomas Coleman, Public Education in Upper Canada, (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York, Brandow Printing Co., 1907), p. 108.

72. Putman, op. cit., p. 247.

his writings on method.[73]

Ryerson intended that pupils in the Normal School should be carefully selected. In a circular to Municipal Councils sent out in 1846, he instructed each Council to select one or more young men by public competition and to support them in the Normal School.[74] A resolution of the Board of Education in March 1847, laid down the basic qualifications for entry to the Normal School. Entrants should be at least sixteen years of age, should have a certificate of good moral character from a Minister, should be able to read and write intelligibly, be acquainted with the "simple rules of Arithmetic", and should have made a written declaration of their intent to remain in the teaching profession.[75]

This last requirement would seem to have been felt by some to be not strong enough, for Ryerson's Report for 1847 contained a long section in which he supported the idea of "voluntary obligation". Ryerson was opposed to compulsion in this respect and argued that "if a man does not pursue School Teaching voluntarily, he will not do so successfully and usefully; that it has been found by actual experiment, that those who have regularly qualified themselves for School Teaching, do, as a general rule, follow it, and that in the few instances of their being compelled, or induced, to leave the profession,

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73. Ibid., p. 235.

74. Circular to Municipal Councils, 4 August 1846, Hodgins, op. cit., VI, p. 237.

75. Resolution of the Board of Education, 23 March 1847, ibid., VII, p. 92.

they are not altogether lost to the interests of Common Schools."[76]

If the subject headings quoted in the Journal of Education are a true indication of the course followed by Normal School students, graduates were well prepared in pedagogy and in a wide range of academic subjects. According to the list, the Head Master lectured on Philosophy of Grammar, Parsing, Geography, Art of Reading, Linear Drawing, Reasoning, History, Trigonometry and the Method of Teaching the first Book of Lessons, Music, the Mode of teaching writing, Dictation, Composition, Orthography, Philosophy of Education, and Practice of Teaching. Mr. Hind, the second Master lectured on Algebra, Science and the Practice of Arithmetic, Geometry, Electricity, Magnetism, Heat, Mechanics and Agricultural Chemistry.[77] Further, an order of the Board of Education for Upper Canada provided for a two-hour period beginning at 2 p.m. each Friday afternoon when separate classes of Religious Instruction would be given to Normal School pupils by Clergymen of the religious persuasion to which the pupils belonged.[78]

One must remember that students, admittedly selected ones, could gain entrance to the Normal School at sixteen years of age. The impressive list of subjects offered must therefore have been dealt with at a level commensurate with the age of

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76. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 174-5.

77. Journal of Education, (February 1848), p. 59-60.

78. Order of the Board of Education for Upper Canada, 11 February 1848, Hodgins, op. cit., VII, p. 274.

the students. Also, it must be remembered that the level of teaching the basic subjects in the average elementary school was very low and even outstanding pupils staying at school until sixteen might be prevented from progressing far in their studies by the inferior knowledge of their teachers. There were, therefore, grounds to justify Putman's comment that, although the main purpose of the Normal School was originally to teach the art of teaching, it quickly became necessary to put undue emphasis on the basic subjects.[79]

The intention to open a Normal School had been applauded by the editor of the Globe, who declared his belief that the idea was supported by the general public.[80] As has been stated earlier in another context, the opening of the Normal School on 1st November 1847, was noticed by the Globe and the speeches of the Head Master and an unnamed teacher, presumably Mr. Hind, were given high praise. This was apparently done in order to emphasise the scorn poured on Ryerson's address but this was part of the Globe's vendetta against Ryerson and showed no disapproval of the occasion or the Normal School itself.[81]

While reporting the first public examination of Normal School pupils, the Globe expressed the hope that the Province's education system would benefit from the instruction given at the School. " We may justly expect a far higher tone being given to Education in the Province." The course at Normal School

79. Putman, op. cit., p. 235.
80. Editorial, Globe, 10 December 1844, p. 162.
81. Ibid., 6 November 1847, p. 352.

was only of six months' duration and the Globe warned that miracles could not be performed in such a short time. The Globe was obviously in favour of the institution of the Normal School but felt that the scheme should be expanded. "The idea, that because a man has been six months at the Normal School, he is therefore qualified as a teacher, is absurd." He should attend three sessions and be awarded a diploma.[82]

Further support for the Normal School came from Superintendents of Education. The methods used and taught had greatly impressed the Superintendent of Common Schools for the Township of Etobicoke. In his report for the year 1849, he commented favourably on "the principle of making the pupil thoroughly understand what is taught him." In his opinion, the method used "expands the mind, by calling forth into action the intellectual powers."[83] As we have seen earlier, this was one of the aims of education expressed by Ryerson. The District Superintendent of Victoria, William Hutton, had praise for a product of the Normal School. In his report for 1848, he spoke of one such teacher who "gives very great satisfaction", and he added, "A few more of them would infuse a spirit amongst us which we much require."[84] Praise came also from the Superintendent for Niagara District, Dexter D'Everado. "Among the Teachers exhibiting the greatest improvement . . . in their system of

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82. Editorial, ibid., 15 April 1848, p. 121.

83. Report of the Superintendent of Common Schools for the Township of Etobicoke, 1849, Journal of Education, (May 1850), p. 77-8.

84. Report of the Superintendent for Victoria District, 1848, Hodgins, op. cit., VIII, p. 97.

teaching," he said, "are those who have enjoyed a course of training in the Provincial Normal School." He felt also that they were the most useful teachers.[85] Reference has been made earlier to a comment made by someone outside the world of teaching, Sir John B. Robinson, Chief Justice, when he spoke at the Coburg Assizes on the greatly improved teaching he had witnessed.[86]

Although the Normal School did not, perhaps, immediately produce excellently-formed pedagogues, there seems no doubt that its products were a considerable improvement on the general run of teachers. Apart from a few areas where education was obviously seen as a matter of little importance, justifying little expense or effort, there seems to have been no adverse reaction to the idea of a Normal School nor to the results of its work up to the end of Ryerson's first decade in office. As with all his efforts to improve the status and quality of teachers and to improve the work the teachers did, there was no public antagonism and, indeed, much public support.

Ryerson's work to interest the public in education affairs has been discussed in an earlier chapter and it would seem that the support for, or even lack of opposition to the measures studied in this chapter is a beneficial result

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85. Report of the Superintendent for Niagara District, 1848, ibid., VIII, p. 98.

86. Address by Sir John B. Robinson, Chief Justice, Coburg Assizes, October 1848, ibid., VIII, p. 59.

of his work in public relations.

3. Ryerson and Textbooks.

Ryerson's Report for the year 1845-6 contained quotations from local superintendents of schools "as to the pernicious variety of heterogeneous and unsuitable School Books, which prevent all classification and arrangement in the Schools, and, in some instances, almost paralyze their usefulness."[87] Each school, it seems, used a wide variety of textbooks, with pupils often using whatever they could lay their hands on and even receiving books which had been passed on from older brothers and sisters or parents and grandparents.

Many of the most popular textbooks were American publications, which Ryerson condemned as containing "not only remarks and hints, but often downright imputations against our Civil Polity, Institutions and Government".[88] These books had frequently been brought into Upper Canadian schools by itinerant teachers from America but no-one liked them for they conveyed the impression, as Ryerson had suggested, that the only country worth mentioning and the greatest was the

87. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1845-6, ibid., VI, p. 248.

88. Letter, Ryerson to the Superintendent of Brock District, 1 February 1847, ibid., VI, p. 284.

United States.[89] A Dr. Thomas Rolph had expressed himself, in 1836, as "melancholy" to find "historical reading books describing the American population as the most free and enlightened under heaven; insisting on the superiority of their laws and institutions to those of all the world." American spelling books, dictionaries and grammars taught, in his opinion, "an anti-British dialect and idiom".[90]

We have seen above that Ryerson considered a teacher of far greater pedagogical value than a textbook but he recognised that such books were a valuable source of material in teaching and accordingly wished to create some sort of order regarding the textbooks to be used.

Attempts had been made since early in the nineteenth century to gain centralised control over this aspect of education. Parvin claims that suspicion of the alienistic tendencies of foreign books and teachers was a factor in the decision of the Upper Canada Government to attempt to take control of public education by the Act of 1807.[91]

The Common Schools Act of 1816 left the choice of textbooks to local trustees, but required that they report every

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89. Viola Elizabeth Parvin, Authorization of Textbooks for the Schools of Ontario, 1846-1950, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 29.

90. Hodgins, op. cit., III, p. 3.

91. Parvin, op. cit., p. 28., 47th George III, Chapter VI.

three months to the district board of education the titles of the books used in their schools.[92] In 1824, power was given to the General Board of Education for the Province to prescribe textbooks and curricula,[93] but this power was returned to the Trustees by the Act of 1843.[94]

These measures, however, would seem to have had little real effect towards the true standardisation of textbooks which was Ryerson's aim.

There was opposition. Generally, this came from parents rather than the teachers who tended to welcome Ryerson's measures in this respect. Edmund B. Harrison, an ex-Inspector of Public Schools in the County of Middlesex, referred in reminiscence to a meeting held in 1845 to secure uniformity of textbooks but, he said, it failed "owing to the fact, that some people were wedded to a certain series of Books and would use no other".[95] As with the idea of compulsory school attendance, the prohibition of the use of foreign school books without the express permission of the Board of Education was seen to be an infringement of individual liberty.[96] Dexter D'Everado, the Superintendent of Niagara District, may, as so often, have seen clearly the real objections people had to the prohibition

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92. 56th George III, Chapter XXXVI, Section vi.
93. 4th George IV, Chapter VIII, Section ii.
94. 7th Victoria, Chapter XXIX, Section xliv.
95. Reminiscence, 9 April 1896, Hodgins, op. cit., V, p. 275.
96. Ibid., VI, p. 216.

of foreign School Books, for he pointed out to Ryerson that people disliked having to lay out more money for different books from those which had hitherto been used in the schools. He suggested that it would be better to educate the populace in favour of the desired books.[97] In this, D'Everado was suggesting something Ryerson knew well.

Gordon Buchanan was opposed to centralised control of textbooks. He wrote to Sir Francis Hincks in 1850, "With respect to the control over the School Text Books, I do not see what advantage can arise from vesting the same in a Central Board of any kind. The very fact of any system of Books being dictatorially thrust upon the people of this free Country would naturally render them unpopular."[98] In quoting this letter, Hodgins adds a triumphant footnote, "Experience proved that this opinion here suggested, was not well founded. The Irish National School Text Books recommended by the Provincial Board of Education, were very popular, after they were introduced into the Schools."[99]

It has already been remarked above that Barnard, whose work had some influence on Ryerson, had taken a contrary view to that of Ryerson on the question of centralised control of

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97. Letter, D'Everado to Ryerson, 19 October 1846, ibid., VI, p. 282.

98. Letter, Buchanan to Hincks, 1850, ibid., IX, p. 67.

99. Ibid., IX, p. 67.

education. His views were also opposite to those of Ryerson in the matter of standardised textbooks. In his first report as Secretary to the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools in Connecticut, in the year 1839, he had written, "I do not think it desirable, even if it were practicable, to establish a uniformity of class books, throughout all the schools."[100] However, some eleven years after Barnard's statement in Connecticut, Ryerson was claiming that the neighbouring states of Massachusetts and New York wished that they had brought in centralisation of textbooks and library books earlier than they did.[101]

Ryerson's reasons for the introduction of a uniform series of textbooks were laid out in his report for 1849. They were: "1. The substitution of books of superior value for those of inferior value, or of objectionable character. . . 2. . . . the classification of Pupils, and the greater efficiency of Teaching . . . 3. . . . their greater cheapness. A merchant can sell an article much cheaper when the demand for it is very large, than when the demand is limited."[102]

A ~~short~~ digression may be interpolated here to show how

100. Henry Barnard, First Annual Report, 1839, p. 42-45, John S. Brubacher, (ed.), Henry Barnard on Education, (New York, Russell and Russell Inc., 1965), p. 134.

101. Letter to Governor-General in Council, 21 September 1850, Hodgins, op. cit., X, p. 196.

102. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1849, ibid., VIII, p. 275.

Ryerson strode purposefully through the world of commerce to ensure that copies of his chosen Irish National Series of textbooks were available in the quantities he wanted and, more especially, at the price he thought suitable.

In the same month that Ryerson received notice of his appointment as Chief Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada, September 1844, Messrs. Armour and Ramsay, publishers of school textbooks in Montreal, sought and soon obtained from the Governor-General, Lord Metcalfe, permission to reprint and publish books of the Irish National Series under his patronage. Ryerson was delighted at this coincidence.[103] He wrote to the firm expressing his pleasure and made a half-promise to buy from them at such time as he was able. He was, he said, looking into the matter of textbooks for schools at the request of the government and added, "Nor am I certain, that I shall be able to do better than recommend, for general and permanent use in our Schools, some of those Elementary Books which you are reprinting."[104]

However, the following year, he made arrangements with the Irish School Board to import from them at cost price copies of the Irish National Series,[105] and, in a letter to the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, Ryerson expressed

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103. Ibid., VI, p. 274-5.

104. Letter, 24 October 1844, ibid., VI, p. 275.

105. Ibid., VI, p. 275.

dissatisfaction with their arrangement with Armour and Ramsay by which the firm reprinted the Irish National Series books. "It is understood that the Commissioners have granted this permission to a Canadian publishing house at Montreal, in Lower Canada," he wrote, as though this was a surprise to him. The arrangement was not pleasing to him because Montreal was in "another division of the Province", and "the errors in some of the reprints of the Irish School Books are loudly complained of, and are such as to injure the character of the Books themselves." He sought permission, therefore, for the Provincial Board of Education to reprint "such of the series as they may find it expedient to reproduce on the spot".[106]

The consequence was that, on 27th October 1846, the Provincial Board of Education ordered that an advertisement be sent to Printers and Publishers of School Books in Canada saying that the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland had given authority to the Board of Education for Upper Canada to reprint the Irish National Series books, or, if it was found preferable, they had agreed to supply the Irish editions at a reduced price. Tenders were invited for publication "in every respect uniform with the Irish Editions". Lists, specimens and the reduced prices offered by the Irish Board were available on request. This notice was to be published also in the Toronto

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106. Letter, 24 July 1846, ibid., VI, p. 236.

newspapers.[107]

Armour and Ramsay had reason to feel that they had been betrayed by Ryerson. His half-promise to buy from them, made, admittedly, before he was in office, must have encouraged them greatly to invest time and money in the publication of the Irish Series. Admittedly, also, their haste had led to errors in the printing but it seems clear from the emphasis on reduced prices in the advertisement that Ryerson was more interested in economy than accuracy.

Armour and Ramsay wrote to Ryerson in November 1846, to express their displeasure. After they had expended much money in publishing and advertising, they now found that the Irish Commissioners refused to give them a monopoly for the three years they desired. Further, the Irish Commissioners had given permission to reprint to another Montreal printer and publishing rights to the Board of Education for Upper Canada. The scales were unfairly, they considered, tilted against them. "From such an opposition, we see no other result but a serious and immediate loss. . . . We think we have reason to complain that, after going through 'the heat and struggle of the fight', others should step in and secure the advantages of our labours." They admitted that errors had been made in

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107. Proceedings of the Board of Education for Upper Canada, 27 October 1846, ibid., VI, p. 244-5.

haste but they were being corrected. They asked that Ryerson should take their stock of Irish Series books from them.[108]

Ryerson replied with cool dignity, insisting that the Board had "proceeded fairly and properly". He pointed out that, contrary to what they believed, Armour and Ramsay were in an advantageous position. One can imagine their surprise at this news. Other publishers, Ryerson reminded them, could not sell any of their books because they were not of the kind recommended by the Board. Armour and Ramsay, as he put it, had "a two-fold advantage over all other Canadian Publishers": they were the publishers of books recommended by the Board and they would have the exclusive Canadian market until such time as books were printed elsewhere or imported. It is questionable whether the recipients of Ryerson's letter saw either of these points as advantageous, and Ryerson's further statement made quite clear their position in future business concerning the Irish National Series. "The Board proposes to secure, as far as it can, the Canadian Copyright, for five years, to the Publisher, who shall propose to reprint the Irish School Books in the manner presented, and at the lowest prices." To be successful in tendering, a publisher must agree to sell at a lower price than the Board could import from Ireland at "double the number of pence or shillings, in Halifax currency,

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108. Letter, 3 November 1846, ibid., VI, p. 277.

at which they are sold to Poor Schools in Ireland."[109] Since this was a preferential price offered to Ryerson by the Irish Commissioners, it was unlikely that Canadian publishers would find the Irish Series a profitable line, though, no doubt, a contract from the Provincial Board of Education was itself a satisfactory gain, giving the possibility of greater profits to come.

Armour and Ramsay replied to Ryerson that to adhere to his terms would mean that they must cut the discount they could offer to Booksellers,[110] to which Ryerson retorted coldly that if a publisher could reproduce the books in as good a form as the original and at a lower price, "he will have the advantage of the market, -- not otherwise."[111] Ryerson's manner was now far from that of his original letter to Armour and Ramsay a little over two years previously.

The final letter from Armour and Ramsay in this exchange has an almost pathetic air of resignation. They would sell at two pence Halifax currency for each penny sterling, which was the highest price allowed under Ryerson's terms, and, they said, "As matters now stand, we must try to sell off, as rapidly as we can, during the few months that are left to us to do so."[112]

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109. Letter, 11 November 1846, ibid., VI, p. 277-8.
110. Letter, 16 November 1846, ibid., VI, p. 278.
111. Letter, 30 November 1846, ibid., VI, p. 279.
112. Letter, 9 December 1846, ibid., VI, p. 280.

From his first letter to Armour and Ramsay, which seemed to offer them particular benefits, Ryerson's communications to them on this matter became rapidly more impersonal, his final reply throwing Armour and Ramsay firmly into the general run of publishers and printers. The Board of Education, he said, had decided that, since all tenders received were very similar, "the interests of the Schools will be best consulted by leaving the reprinting of the National School Books open to all Publishers and Printers, who may be disposed to engage in it." His last sentence seems a little unworthy of a man of the cloth in its suggestion of a Parthian shaft: "Should you get out correct reprints of any of the National Books, I shall have pleasure in laying them before the Board for its recommendation."[113]

Ryerson's handling of this episode seems uncharacteristically lacking in the skill in public relations which he showed elsewhere. He regularly turned aside opposition and criticism in order to proceed firmly in the way he had chosen, but usually his preparation and skill were such that little damage seemed to have been done in the process. It was, indeed, Ryerson's blessing that the end result was usually beneficial to the system of education so that previous opposition or criticism appeared to have been groundless.

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113. Letter, 23 December 1846, ibid., VI, p. 280.

In this matter of the publication of textbooks, Ryerson was himself quite satisfied that his method was completely just. To each of the many tenderers, he wrote, "I know not that the Board of Education in Upper Canada could have adopted more equitable and efficient measures . . . than those which I have thus briefly explained." He claimed also in these letters that competition for the publishing and printing rights had been left open at the request of the principal publishers, a claim which does not seem justified by the correspondence and decisions of the Provincial Board of Education studied above.[114] Ryerson had had his way and the education system had benefitted, at least economically, but in this skirmish, Ryerson's triumph was perhaps less glorious than on other occasions.

Ryerson was determined to introduce a uniform series of textbooks in the schools of Upper Canada but towards the local officials and teachers he moved less heavily than in his dealings with publishers. As he explained to District Superintendents in 1846, "The first object to be aimed at, is the use of but one uniform set of books in one School." Afterwards, this could be extended into the whole district and, finally, into the system.[115] The gentle approach was made clear in a letter Ryerson wrote to the Provincial Secretary, the Honourable Dominick Daly, earlier the same year. "I intend that the Board should

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114. Letter, 6 January 1847, ibid., VI, p. 90.

115. Circular to District Superintendents, December 1846, ibid., VI, p. 267.

make out a list of School Books in each branch of learning that they would recommend, and another list that they would permit, -- leaving the Trustees of Schools to select from these lists."[116] Ryerson's psychology was good for surely few trustees would scorn the list of officially recommended texts even though a personally preferred volume was in the permitted list. Slowly, perhaps, but surely, people would be brought to make the choices and decisions Ryerson required.

As we have seen, it was Ryerson's policy regarding all changes to lead the people gently but firmly into his way of thinking. In this matter of textbooks, however, he had received an order from the Board of Education to take a gentle approach particularly towards unauthorised school books in use in 1846, "rather permitting such Books to fall into disuse, than to exclude them altogether."[117] The order was almost certainly unnecessary, for Ryerson wrote on the same day to Dexter D'Everado, the Superintendent of Niagara District, "I do not intend to recommend any other than the gradual introduction of our own Books, as those now in use become worn out, and new ones are required. . . . I desire to do nothing on this subject, which will not be in harmony with the general conviction of all persons informed, in any tolerable degree, on the subject."[118]

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116. Letter, 3 March 1846, Journal of Education, (February 1848), p. 37-8. Ryerson's underlining.

117. Order of the Board of Education, 30 October 1846, Hodgins, op. cit., VI, p. 245.

118. Letter, 30 October 1846, ibid., VI, p. 282-3.

It would seem that there was some disagreement with Ryerson's plan to introduce uniform textbooks in one school and then gradually throughout the system, for in his Report for 1849, he uses as a straw man an argument that although uniformity may be desirable in each school, it may not be so in the entire Province. Ryerson then casts at his target the retort that he knows of only one series of books worthy of recommendation -- the Irish, and "if a series of Text Books is best for the schools in one Township, or County, why is it not the best for every Township and County?"[119] To this, there seems to have been no reply.

The publisher's prospectus for the Irish National Series of textbooks, issued by Armour and Ramsay in 1846, claimed that, as well as learning to read, the pupil would acquire "a knowledge of sound moral principles, and a vast number of important facts." It continued, "There is nothing sectarian,"[120] the books having originally been designed to be acceptable to both Roman Catholics and Protestants in the difficult religious conditions of Ireland. We have seen in an earlier chapter that Ryerson sought to provide an education system in which books based on sound moral principles yet containing nothing sectarian would fit very satisfactorily.

The presentation for learning of "a vast number of impor-

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119. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education for 1849, ibid., VIII, p. 275.

120. Ibid., VI, p. 276.

tant facts" would seem to have been a valuable quality of the series in an age when books were not in good supply and when most students would leave school with only limited ability to read for themselves. Facts learned by rote in school might well remain with them for the rest of their lives. Today, it may be considered that the wheel has turned full circle since the existence of a proliferation of reference texts is used as an argument against the learning of facts in school.

However, one may doubt a little whether Ryerson's views on teaching method allowed him to approve whole-heartedly of this feature of the books since, as was shown earlier in this chapter, he seemed to prefer pupils to acquire information more through experience than by rote learning. This observation apart, there is no doubt that Ryerson considered the Irish National Series in a very favourable light. On the occasion when he also gave his views on method, he referred to them as books, "which are imbued with the purest principles, and embrace the whole range of topics which have been recommended in the former part of this Report, as proper subjects of Common School Instruction."[121] It was inevitable that this should be the series which Ryerson wanted adopted as the main officially authorised set of textbooks in the schools of Upper Canada.

They were placed on the list of authorised textbooks from

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121. Report on a System of Public Elementary School Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846, ibid., VI, p. 204.

which local authorities were eventually required to choose the books for their schools. This list remained in force in Upper Canada and then Ontario from 1846 to 1950 when an end was made to the aspect of it which authorised only one book at a particular level for each subject.[122]

There was criticism that a closely limited list of approved textbooks had a stultifying effect on the production of new texts and this was to some extent true for in the period from 1846 to 1867, although there were a few changes in the authorised list, very few books were written and published specially for Upper Canada.[123] This, however, was how Ryerson wanted things to be, for he wished to limit the books used in schools and he was very satisfied with his principal textbooks, the Irish National Series.

Ryerson was deluged with recommendations that various people's favourite textbooks should be adopted but, holding firmly to his own policy, he regularly replied that, although the book recommended had obvious merits, a similar one, found in the Irish National Series, had additional benefits, one of which was Board approval, and could be obtained at lower cost.[124] He was confident that his choice would be approved by the populace and claimed in 1847 that no newspaper in the country had uttered a single word against the Irish National Series once he had made

122. Parvin, op. cit., p. 39.

123. Ibid., p. 37.

124. Hodgins, op. cit., VI, p. 273-289.

copies available to the Districts.[125] He was prepared to send a complete set of samples at his own expense, as he had himself financed his Journal of Education, but he was saved by the generosity of the Irish School Board. They sent him gratis twenty-five complete sets of readers and examples of other books which they sanctioned, together with lots of twenty-five each of samples of educational stationery, such as School Registers, Daily Report Books and Class Rolls.[126]

It would seem that Ryerson was right in believing that there would be general approval of his uniform textbooks and of his choice of the Irish National Series. In his Report for 1847, he quoted many District Superintendents who had reported themselves as being in favour of the textbooks. "Wherever these Books are used," Ryerson commented, "great improvement is visible, even in the discipline of the schools."[127]

Colbourne District Council soon urged all the Trustees of the common schools in the district to replace worn-out or lost books by those in the Irish National Series.[128] In somewhat complicated phraseology, the Superintendent for Ottawa District, Thomas Higginson, marvelled at Ryerson's success in establishing centralised control of textbooks. "In a mixed community, such

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125. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 163.

126. Special Report, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 107.

127. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1847, ibid., VII, p. 176.

128. Ibid., VI, p. 289.

as we are, it would seem vain otherwise to expect anything like uniformity; instead of harmony, we might look for confusion, instead of an enlightened and judicious selection of these Books, we would see, in the choice of our Text-Books, the unhallowed effects of national prejudice and party strife, and, instead of our youth growing up united, loyal and patriotic, we would see them, as divided, as intolerant and as prejudiced as we are."[129]

A retired teacher, Robert Rooney, who had taught in the Township of Arthur, in the County of Wellington, looked back on the introduction of the Irish National Series of textbooks and commented, "It is my opinion that they were the best School Books we have ever had, because they stored the mind of the pupil with a very substantial knowledge of Scripture, of History and of Simple Natural Philosophy."[130] It is interesting that Hodgins should quote this opinion for, although it is in praise of the series championed by Ryerson, the idea of the books "storing the mind" of the pupil is, to some degree, at variance with Ryerson's own attitudes to textbooks and teaching method.

Perhaps more in sympathy with Ryerson's approach were the comments of W.W. Pegg, a pioneer teacher in the County of Norfolk. His praise was directed principally to the Fifth Book of the series. "Its Jewish and Ancient History were explained

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129. Ibid., IX, p. 62.

130. "Reminiscences of Superannuated School Teachers", ibid., IX, p. 298.

in a brief, concise and comprehensive manner, while there was enough Animal and Vegetable Physiology to give a pupil a good idea of the subject and inspire him with a desire to know more by getting a full and complete text book on each subject."[131]

Uniformity of textbooks received general approval during Ryerson's first decade in office. In 1850, Ryerson claimed proudly that there was a greater uniformity of text-books in the rural districts of Upper Canada than in the State of New York,[132] and he claimed that use of the Irish National Series was almost universal in Upper Canada by 1855. "The books not recommended or sanctioned, according to law are fast disappearing from the Schools."[133]

Pupils learned to read in the schools and the material they read there was becoming regulated according to Ryerson's view of what was desirable, but while they were away from the guiding control of the school, they should have what Hodgins described as an "abundant and perennial supply of the best and purest literature, as it issued from the press".[134] Therefore, said Ryerson, "Next to providing School-houses, School Text-books, Maps and other Requisites, I deemed the establishment of

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131. Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, II, p. 112.

132. Egerton Ryerson, "Address to the Inhabitants of Upper Canada", Journal of Education, (January 1850), p. 1-2.

133. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1855, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., XI, p. 285.

134. Ibid., X, p. 195.

Public School Libraries of the greatest importance."[135]

The Education Act of 1850 gave the Chief Superintendent authority "to employ all lawful means in his power to promote the establishment of school libraries for general reading" and allowed £3,000 per year for the purchase of books.[136] Ryerson wrote to the Provincial Secretary in 1851, "During my recent visit to the United States and Great Britain I made arrangements for purchasing Books and Publications for these purposes at very reduced prices. I purchased them to a considerable amount . . . and shall order more the ensuing week."[137]

As with textbooks, Ryerson wanted to prevent the circulation of books he felt unsuitable and so established a book depository from which books could be purchased to furnish the libraries. He prepared a catalogue listing and describing all available books. The control of books through the catalogue and depository proved to be an unpopular move with the bookselling trade for, as had been the case concerning textbooks, Ryerson was in fact dictating titles and prices of books they might publish. In spite of objections, however, the book depository continued in being until it was abolished in 1881, five

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135. Reply to an Order of the House of Assembly demanding a Return on Public School Libraries, 28 November 1852, ibid., X, p. 192.

136. 13th and 14th Victoria, Chapter XLVIII, Sections xxxv and xli.

137. Letter to Provincial Secretary, 9 August 1851, ibid., X, p. 99.

years after Ryerson's retirement.[138]

After the chaos and dissatisfaction that existed on the matter of textbooks at the beginning of Ryerson's term of office, it is not surprising that there was little adverse criticism of his work to create order even though this virtually eliminated any freedom of choice for authorities, teachers or parents. Ryerson firmly indicated the undesirability of books other than his choice and made it technically impossible for others to be used or even published. Indeed, it was not until the time of Confederation that some discontent arose over the insufficiently Canadian content of the readers of the Irish National Series[139] and, as we have seen, it was not until the mid-twentieth century that it was decided to ease the constraint of the authorised list.

Having considered Ryerson's work concerning teachers, their methods and the textbooks they were to use, we should now turn to the buildings in which they worked, and examine criticism on this subject and the extent to which Ryerson sought to improve the buildings during his first decade in office.

4. School Rooms and Buildings.

Most school buildings in use at the time Ryerson took

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138. George W. Ross, The School System of Ontario (Canada): Its History and Distinctive Features, (New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1896), p. 156-7.

139. Parvin, op. cit., p. 40.

office were crude, roughly-furnished structures. As a new community became established, one of the first public buildings erected was usually a school-house which would be a log building approximately 20 feet long and 20 feet wide, in which roughly-shaped benches and desk tops would be fitted around the walls. There may have been a window, and many early descriptions tell of continuous ventilation through gaps between the logs.[140] An iron stove would be placed in the centre of the room. In cities, public school might be held in any available rented rooms, sometimes sharing the building with a church or courts of law.

A sketch of a school house of about 1850 was given in a paper by the Reverend John Gray, "an experienced School Inspector", according to Hodgins:

> There stands the School House, an ungainly looking Log Building, so constructed as to convey the impression that the builder had striven to make the place as ugly and rough as possible. As you enter the Building, the first thing that attracts your attention is a large Box-stove; and the atmosphere is so oppressive as to show that the laws of ventilation are neglected. At the far end is a small platform, on which stands a Chair and also a plain, substantial Desk; and behind it is seated the Master, with a rod, or pair of taws, lying beside him. In front of him are some rough unpainted Forms, without backs. Along the sides of the building are long, badly constructed Desks, which are used in turn by the pupils, while most practise the art of penmanship on their slates. . . . The whole appearance indicates the strictest economy, as if education were a luxury, and not a right and necessity.[141]

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140. Hodgins, op. cit., XI, p. 60.

141. Rev. John Gray, D.D., A paper for the East Simcoe Teachers' Convention, copied by Hodgins from the Orillia packet, "Reminiscences of Superannuated School Teachers, 1850-51", Hodgins, Doc. Hist., IX, p. 295-6..

One should add that, at the foot of the description, Hodgins adds the following: "Note. The remainder of Doctor Gray's Paper refers to an improved state of things."

We have seen that Ryerson made it his aim to improve the quality of education and teaching in public schools. He wished also to provide good, well-equipped school buildings. In this area, though, he could do little other than encourage, for a connection between good educational results and a good building is not easily seen. He was not able to tempt local officials with samples sent gratis, as he had done with text-books, and a school building was but one of many expensive public buildings to be erected in growing communities.

No-one, it seems, saw fit to dispute the fact that commodious structures were desirable and all contemporary comment or criticism on the subject of school rooms and school buildings was about the situation as it existed rather than about Ryerson's aims or actions. Indeed, adverse criticism of school buildings and the conditions in which teachers and pupils had to work continued well into the 1870s, showing that progress in this area was slow. No-one, however, seemed to direct criticism at Ryerson or the local authorities for this slow progress, it was always the physical conditions which were the target.

Ryerson, himself, said in 1846, "With a few exceptions,

the School Houses are deficient in almost every essential quality, as places adapted for elementary instruction",[142] and, in 1849, the Globe commented in an editorial entitled "Upper Canada Schools", that in Ryerson's Report for 1848, less than one fifth of the schools were classed as "good or first class schools" -- 537 out of 2,770.[143] Even so, the writer of the editorial does not use the information to make any judgment on the fact, his space and energies being used to declaim about "a glaring deficiency" he had found elsewhere in the report, and one which we have considered earlier in this study.

When Ryerson gave his Report for 1850, he classified the schools in three groups, commenting, "The standing of the Schools is the judgment of their respective merits formed by the several local superintendents." Of the 3,059 schools in Upper Canada on which he reported, he classed 367 as "good, or first class", 1,063 were "middling, or second class", and 933 were inferior, or third class". "Free Schools" or Separate Schools accounted for 252 which he did not classify, leaving 444 unaccounted for.[144]

In another section of the Report, Ryerson quotes figures showing the condition of the actual school buildings in Upper Canada. It seems that 1,036 school houses were in bad repair --

142. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1845-6, ibid., VI, p. 248.

143. Editorial, Globe, 16 August 1849, p. 282.

144. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1850, Hodgins, op. cit., IX, p. 168.

"a melancholy fact" -- , 187 were not "furnished with suitable desks, etcetera", 996 had no "proper facilities for ventilation", 978 had no playground, and 1,215 were "reported as having no privies!" although 371 were so provided.[145]

It was not a contemporary belief that there should be anything enjoyable or even pleasant about education, and it is, therefore, reasonable that the general school conditions should have been plain. However, the Reverend W.H. Landon was disturbed by the possible effect on the children of the crudity of the conditions. The School House frequently stood in a field and opposite it and to the sides, would be public and private buildings. "Yet here," cried the gentleman, "thus surrounded and thus observed -- sexes and ages are mingled together -- must the most private calls of nature be answered, under circumstances which must effectually destroy all self-respect, and work rapid degradation upon a whole juvenile community."[146]

The fact that, presumably, the parents, children and trustees had not demanded suitable enclosures suggests that in their eyes the potential for degradation was not as great as Landon feared. However, he persisted and, in his capacity of Local Superintendent of Schools in Blenheim, Oxford and

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145. Ibid., (Exclamation mark in original.)

146. Rev. W.H. Landon, "The State of the Schools in the Brock District, 1849", Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, II, p. 82-9.

Zorra West, he wrote to Ryerson in 1853 making a series of suggestions about regulations for schools. One was that new school buildings should have "a Woodshed and two separate Privies, with two separate entrances to them in enclosed Yards."[147]

It would seem that large numbers of poorly ventilated, insanitary, uncomfortable, ill-furnished school houses still existed some twenty years later. As we shall see, many new and greatly improved buildings had been erected, but as each new settlement was established, the process of development from its primitive stages was gone through. Inspector Harcourt addressed teachers of Haldimand on the subject of unsatisfactory school buildings existing in 1871. He said, "No one, whose attention has been called to the matter, could imagine the miserable condition of the majority of the School Houses of 1871", and Hodgins added the comment, "What is true of Haldimand . . . is also true of other parts of the Province."[148] The Inspector for the County of Lanark, H.L. Slack, wrote in 1877, "There is no such thing as a 'private room' for the Teacher in the County," and he continued, "The outside Premises are far behind what they should be. . . . I turn my attention to them next."[149]

Progress was slow but it did happen. Around 1860, there

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147. Letter, 1853, "Suggestion III, School Sites, etcetera", Hodgins, Doc. Hist., XI, p. 60.

148. Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, II, p. 132.

149. Report of the Inspector for Lanark County, 1877, ibid.

was agitation in Kingston about the over-crowded, insanitary and unsuitable rooms that were being used for schools, and the City Council was urged to obtain the necessary funds to erect suitable buildings. Hodgins commented on the situation, "The response was not either enthusiastic or immediate, yet in time the money came."[150]

Before Ryerson's appointment, when he was planning an education system, he indicated in an address published in the British Colonist, that one of the features of such a system would be appropriate school houses.[151] However, in contrast to the late twentieth century attitude which would, it seems, rather spend vast sums on school buildings and electronic and other devices than on such truly pedagogical improvements as the reduction of the pupil-teacher ratio, Ryerson concentrated on improvements in curriculum, teaching method, textbooks and public attitudes before turning with full legal force towards buildings. Ryerson's General Regulations of 1850 urged that "Trustees will always find it the best economy to have a commodious School House, kept comfortably and properly furnished",[152] but it was not until 1871 that the law made it

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150. Ibid., I, p. 62.

151. Egerton Ryerson, "Introductory Address" to his defence of Sir Charles Metcalfe, British Colonist, 31 May 1844, no page number.

152. "General Regulations for the Organization, Government and Discipline of Common Schools in Upper Canada, adopted on the 5th day of August, 1850, by the Council of Public Instruction, as authorized by the Common School Act of 1850", Section 2, Duties of Common School Trustees in Rural School Sections, Hodgins, Doc. Hist., IX, p. 196.

obligatory for School Corporations to provide "adequate Accommodations for all children of School age".[153]

In a circular to Mayors of cities and towns, written in 1848, Ryerson showed no great urgency on this matter. New school buildings should be erected as and when possible, he urged, but "it must be the work of time",[154] and in another circular written in the same year, he said that it was not his intention that all necessary school buildings should be constructed at once. This would impose too great a burden upon the inhabitants. "It must be the work of years."[155]

For those who were ready to begin building, and, no doubt, to encourage those who were hesitant, Ryerson published, in his Journal of Education, extracts from "a very comprehensive and excellent Work" on school architecture by Henry Barnard.[156] Beginning in February 1849, Ryerson published plans, drawings and articles from Barnard's book, together with illustrated articles and correspondence on methods of heating and ventilation.[157] In his report for 1850, Ryerson said that he had bought for distribution 400 copies of Barnard's book. "I doubt not," he said, "but its influence will be very beneficial." He sent a copy to each

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153. An Act to improve the Common and Grammar Schools of the Province of Ontario, 1871, ibid., XXII, p. 213.

154. Circular to Mayors of Cities and Towns, 1848, ibid., VII, p. 220.

155. Circular to Heads of City and Town Corporations, 15 January 1848, Journal of Education, (January 1848) p. 21.

156. Henry Barnard, School Architecture, ed. by Jean and Robert McClintock, (New York, Teachers College Press), 1970.

157. Journal of Education, (February 1849 et seq.)

of the County, Township, City, Town and Village Municipalities in Upper Canada.[158]

In comparison with Ryerson's efforts in other areas during his first decade in office, his work towards improved school buildings was conducted in a very gentle fashion. It has been suggested above that this was because this task came low in his priorities but it could also have been because the improvement of all public buildings was part of the normal process of development of communities.

Log or frame buildings in cities were gradually replaced by brick or stone structures. Sometimes the improvement was simply a change to a better situation with a frame building being moved bodily to a new position on the lot or a new spot further along the street. In at least one case, it was drawn by a team of oxen. Proper systems of heating and ventilation were installed.[159]

New buildings were often described as "substantial" and "commodious": some were of two storeys. Teachers from Peterborough recalled their improved school buildings of the period 1852 to 1864. "The rooms were large, airy, well-lighted and heated with Stoves. They were furnished with Maps, Blackboards, and all other Requisites. Ink and Pens, as well as Paper for

158. Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, 1850, Hodgins, op. cit., IX, p. 168.

159. Hodgins, Schools and Colleges, II, p. 21.

Writing Exercises were supplied free to the Pupils." "Our School House was a disused Methodist Church, remodelled into Class Rooms. . . . Except for the First and Second Books [sic] Boys and Girls were taught separately. Three of the Rooms were large, fairly well lighted and heated. The desks were the old-fashioned long ones with benches to match, and there was a Blackboard in each of the Rooms. There was a Map of the World, and also one of each of the Continents which we used in common. Upstairs were two small Rooms formed from the Gallery of the old Church, heated by a Stove Pipe from below. As we, too, had only one Room downstairs, we utilized one of these small Rooms for taking certain Classes."[160]

Hamilton Central School was begun in 1851. It was made "of stone, in the Roman style of architecture, simple and substantial, and provided with a proper system of heating and ventilating. . . . It was the first property owned by the Board. Previous to that time all Schools were kept in rented buildings without any playgrounds, or modern conveniences."[161]

In contrast to the situation in other areas of his work during the first decade, Ryerson was sailing with rather than against the wind of criticism as it concerned matters directly affecting pedagogy. This was not an area where his philosophy

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160. "Personal Reminiscences of Teachers in the Town of Peterborough, 1852-1864", ibid., I, p. 109-111.

161. J.H. Smith, "Historical Sketch of the Central School, Hamilton 1853-1903", ibid., I, p. 83-107.

ran counter to that of the general public nor did his plans appear to place a heavier financial burden on some rather than others. The raising of the quality and status of teachers was the principal concern of the teachers themselves and they were generally in favour of it. Improved teaching methods, better organisation of the textbook situation and the prospect of more congenial school rooms also met with the favour of the people most concerned, the teachers, themselves. Improved school buildings were a matter for public concern but such improvements did not take place until the wealth and status of a township were such that solid and well-designed public buildings were generally felt to be desirable elements of progress.

Of the matters considered in this chapter, the only one where Ryerson met with any real opposition to his policy was in the matter of the reprinting and publication of textbooks of the Irish National Series and here, it has been suggested, he proceeded firmly in the way he had chosen but without his customary skill in smoothing not only the path ahead but the ground to sides and rear.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Both before and after his appointment as Assistant and then Chief Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada, Ryerson was clear in his mind regarding the ideas he wished to put into practice in his education system and the means by which he wanted to implement them. Other people were not always of the same mind but it was Ryerson's will which triumphed. In view of this fact, this study began with the hypothesis that, during his first decade in office at least, Ryerson continued purposefully on his chosen way, ignoring or brushing aside criticism of his aims and actions.

For reasons given in the introduction, the study has been limited in space to the field of public elementary education and in time to approximately the first decade of Ryerson's Superintendency, that is from 1844 to the middle of the 1850s. It was felt reasonable to give little consideration to the question, under some discussion at the present time, as to whether Ryerson was an innovator in his own right or merely a developer of other people's ideas, since the fact of importance to this study is that he was responsible for presenting and putting into practice ideas, whatever their origin.

Before attempting to assess the validity of the hypothesis, it would seem apposite to summarise the discussion of the pre-

ceding chapters on the subject of Ryerson's reaction to criticism and opposition.

Two prominent traits in Ryerson's character would seem to have been thoroughness and persistence, and these were the factors which enabled him to proceed as he wished as though there was noone who might oppose him. Yet, he was aware of his critics for he would often overwhelm them with highly structured and lengthy defences of his case and, sometimes, harsh and scornful denunciations of theirs.

It would, however, be wrong to claim that he was dictatorial or autocratic for he rarely used force to have his way. He simply moved on in his chosen way, and by dint of clever preparation and persuasion, was able to make people believe in the end that they also wanted to travel that same way.

Ryerson was accused of seeking to take away the liberty of the people of Upper Canada in the manner of "Prussianism". He retorted, with some justification it must be admitted, that this was not so. He insisted on the morality and social justification for each move he made. Yet, Ryerson believed that the individual will must be subordinated in civil matters to measures designed for the good of the majority and so his own plans for centralised control and a degree of moulding of the people were not moderated.

Demands for greater local control were ignored. The policy of centralisation continued, although schemes such as that of School Visitors gave the impression of greater local participation. Ryerson argued convincingly against objections to control being in the hands of the Superintendent rather than in those of the Board of Education. He believed that his way provided greater efficiency and more clearly defined responsibility, and it must be admitted that this was shown to be so.

At a time when a great part of the population was struggling to establish itself, many criticised Ryerson's intention to provide teaching in a broad range of subjects: the "three Rs" were deemed sufficient. Ryerson believed otherwise and made unequivocal public statements of his views which brooked no opposite opinion. Knowing his people, he reminded them that there was commercial value in broader learning.

Similarly, those who objected to religious instruction in schools made no impression on Ryerson's progress. He went ahead with appropriate regulations and reported annually on the increasing use of the Bible and prayers in schools. His opponents appeared to make some headway with the passing of the "Cameron" Act which would have restricted religious education but Ryerson campaigned so vigorously for his point of view that the act was repealed. It must, in fairness, be added here that the claim of his opponents that he wanted religious instruction to be com-

pulsory was shown to be wrong. It was not Ryerson's way to compel, especially when persuasion, however vigorous, could produce the same effect.

It was claimed that Ryerson's appointment was a mark of political favour. Even his fellow Methodists expressed concern over the suspicion. Ryerson denied it but admitted later that there was a connection between his non-appointment in 1842 and the untimely death of Lord Sydenham. One must also bear in mind that Ryerson's own family connections, in spite of his being turned out of the family home at a fairly early age, were with the leaders of the Establishment. Ryerson did not allow these imputations to give him pause and, it must be noted, he continued in office under a victorious Reform government.

Ryerson was severely criticised from some quarters over the time he had spent touring Europe and America immediately after his appointment. He defended his actions as eloquently as ever and made many further trips for purposes to do with the establishment of the education system. Since it was his practice to finance himself, at least for the earlier trips, it is perhaps reasonable that he should not have heeded his critics on this matter.

Critics accused Ryerson of being influenced from foreign sources. He never denied this and, indeed, his statement of policy in his Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada is largely composed of references to sources

in Europe and America. He insisted that such foreign borrowings he had made were always chosen with regard to their suitability for Upper Canada. He continued to make detailed reference to foreign sources in his writings and speeches, appearing to be in no way embarrassed by his critics on this score. It is, perhaps, an indication of the truth of Ryerson's claim that he kept the needs of Upper Canada in mind, that he sought to remove the influence of American teachers and textbooks, while ensuring that the principal textbooks in use in Upper Canada were those of the Irish National Series.

Ryerson was determined that there should be uniformity of textbooks in the schools, a desirable end in itself since, when he took office, there was a heterogeneous collection of textbooks in use in the system and often in an individual school. Ryerson had chosen the Irish National Series as the principal textbooks for reasons which were valid, particularly in that they offered a broad spectrum of information in addition to teaching and exercising the basic skills. The method used in them, progression from known to unknown, was pleasing to Ryerson though, as has been remarked, their presentation of "useful facts" for memorisation seemed at conflict with Ryerson's own condemnation of rote learning. This he did not see, or preferred not to see.

His determination to make the Irish National Series the basic uniform textbooks led him, it has been shown, into uncha-

racteristically heavy-handed treatment of publishers and printers, and particularly harsh and, one might argue, dishonest dealings with the Montreal firm of Armour and Ramsay.

It was in the matter of textbooks that Ryerson's actions during his first decade in office were at their most autocratic. Publishers were put in a position where they might sell only the books of which Ryerson approved and at the price he was willing to pay; he made very clear to local authorities that all but his choice of books were unsuitable, and, by setting up his book depository, he made it easy for local authorities to obtain books, but only those of his choice. There was, not surprisingly, criticism that Ryerson was interfering with individual liberty, but, believing firmly that uniformity was for the good of the system -- a belief in which he was supported by the teachers -- he ignored such criticism.

During the two decades of the 1830s and 1840s, local authorities had found themselves subject to a series of acts modifying the Common School system in Upper Canada. When Ryerson took office in 1844, there began, in addition, a small flood of circulars and memoranda addressed by Ryerson to almost everyone concerned with education from parents and teachers on the one hand, to Wardens of Districts on the other. All were designed to help in the interpretation of acts and regulations and contained, for those able to read them, thorough and sound direction and advice. Ryerson's style, it has been suggested, was, even

for his time, pedantic and complex and, at a time when the adult population had not had the benefits of the universal education that Ryerson sought to provide, there must have been many officials who had difficulty in interpreting their duties. Ryerson had little patience with criticism that the provisions of the acts and his requirements concerning them were too complicated. His reaction was to point out tartly that all could be reduced to a few simple points and that the law could not bestow intelligence. He did not seem to see that all were not necessarily blessed with his intellectual gifts of analysis.

On the question of whether education should be universal and compulsory, there were two extreme points of view. Ryerson was unequivocally in favour; his most vocal critics were firmly against the idea. The populace in general saw school as a place to send their children when they were not needed for more important work. Ryerson believed that for patriotic, political, economic and sociological reasons, universal and compulsory education was desirable in Upper Canada and he proceeded according to this belief. In this matter, it would not seem reasonable to expect him to heed his critics for to do so would surely have meant the total abandonment of one of his fundamental policies to the detriment, in his opinion, of the Province.

That education should be free caused more general controversy. Ryerson intended that, since all benefitted from a well-educated populace, all should meet the costs of education.

His tax on property affected large numbers of people, many of them non-parents, and there was considerable objection to the idea that people with few or no children should subsidise the progeny of more prolific families. Ryerson claimed that Christian philanthropy would win the day and went ahead with his plans. If it did not, he warned, he was prepared to use compulsion. In spite of a setback when the relevant clause was voted out of the Common Schools Act of 1846, he continued a campaign of correspondence and speeches in favour of free schools and of the property tax as the principal means of financing them.

Many argued that vital bonds -- those between parent and teacher, and between parent and child -- would be damaged if free schools were imposed. For the teachers, however, free schooling meant release from the degrading and often disheartening practice of collecting fees from parents. This was a further reason why Ryerson did not heed criticism on this matter.

Ryerson did not always ignore criticism in the sense that he proceeded as though criticism did not exist. It has been apparent in this study and in the preceding paragraphs of this summary that, while moving in his chosen way, Ryerson would subject opposing points of view to heavy bombardment. Such bombardment has been likened to a broadside from a contemporary battleship.

His defeat of the "Cameron" Act is a case in point. Having been tricked in its initial stages, Ryerson journeyed to Montreal to press his arguments in opposition to the Bill; on its passing through the House, he immediately offered his resignation, a threat he repeated a little later, it being accepted in neither case. He began a lengthy campaign, lobbying by correspondence the Attorney General and the Provincial Secretary, using both public and private letters, in which he argued minutely his case. He spoke and wrote publicly against the Act and he succeeded in obtaining permission to continue in office under the terms of previous acts, while having the "Cameron" act repealed and replaced by the Act of 1850, one of his own designing.

Publicity was a very strong weapon in Ryerson's arsenal. As indicated above, he did move purposefully onward regardless of criticism, but regularly, when the moment of decision arrived, the general public had been so prepared by his advance publicity -- his articles, his speeches, his circulars, his memoranda -- that they hardly seemed to notice that changes had taken place.

Ryerson involved people at the local level in decisions and administration by informing them and making it possible for them to elect Trustees or, in certain cases, to be School Visitors. Local superintendents were required to keep familiar with their own local conditions so that they could write annual

reports to Ryerson according to prescribed formulae. Yet, throughout his long term of office, Ryerson worked to increase centralised control of the education system.

In working towards compulsory education, Ryerson made no attempt to disguise that he intended to bring people to accept the concept rather than impose it upon them. We have seen that it was not until 1871 that compulsion was given the force of law. Ryerson worked to make schooling more attractive and obviously beneficial by raising standards of teachers, teaching and buildings, and tried to make use of the competitive qualities in people so that children would be sent to school because a neighbour's children already went.

It has been noted that Ryerson himself received no criticism with regard to his efforts to raise the status, quality and salary of teachers, to improve their teaching conditions, to introduce better teaching methods, to make available more and better aids to teaching in the form of books, maps, globes and models. Criticism in this case was directed towards the conditions which Ryerson sought to change and, apart from commercial objections to his Depository, that centre, his Museum, the Normal School and his pedagogical writings in the Journal of Education and his Annual Reports, particularly that of 1846, were generally welcomed.

It would seem reasonable to claim that during his first decade in office as Chief Superintendent of Education for Upper

Canada, Ryerson did continue purposefully on his chosen way, ignoring or turning away criticism and opposition. There is no condemnation implied in this statement. Although it is not the intention of the writer to suggest that the end justifies the means, it would seem presumptuous to condemn Ryerson for his methods when he was so successful in establishing and maintaining an organised Provincial system of education. One could argue that the bureaucratic faults of the late twentieth century are the direct result of the organisation set up by Ryerson, but in view of the disorganisation he inherited and the conflicting ideologies of "Family Compact" and Reformers which coloured the political scene, it was perhaps essential for the success of the system that a strong hand have firm control.

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