

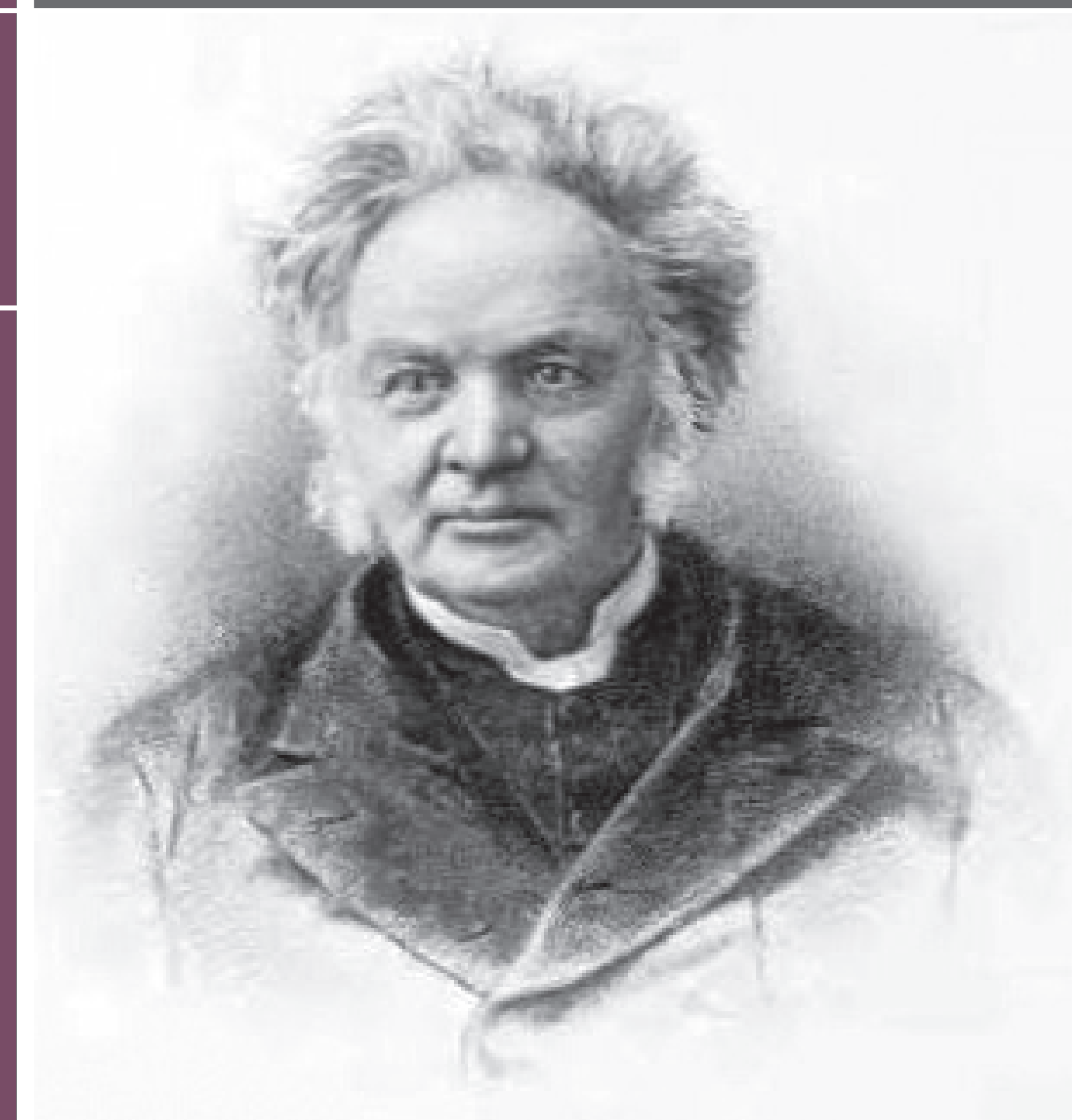
The Government Moves In

In 1846, under the leadership of **Egerton Ryerson**, the Legislature of the Province of Canada passed “*An Act for the better establishment and maintenance of Common Schools in Upper Canada*”. Among other things it provided for:

- a provincial Superintendent of Schools
- the adoption of suitable plans of School Houses with the proper furniture and appendages
- the division of towns and cities into a convenient number of sections, and parts of sections to be numbered and described
- the provision of levies to cover associated costs

This brought **some order into the local education scene**, and the town was divided into 5 sections:

1. in the neighbourhood of the old Court House (New Amherst – now Elgin and Burnham Sts.) on land donated by the Burnham family
2. included the Ball-Street neighbourhood
3. centred at John and Chapel Streets
4. centred on Queen Street – the ‘Cork Town School’
5. centred on King Street



Egerton Ryerson

The teachers were paid partly by local and Government grants, but principally by the pupils, who were expected to pay quarterly fees for their tuition. **The more pupils the teacher could secure, the greater was his salary.** There was no provision made for inspection, and the teacher did not require any special qualifications.

By 1855, a male teacher’s basic salary was **100 pounds per annum**. Local historian, Percy Climo, tells us that the next year a Miss Stickles was engaged by the School Board as Principal of the Court House School. Her salary was **70 pounds**.

In 1858, the Rev. Father Timlin sent a formal notice to the Board stating that the Roman Catholics intended to establish and support a **Catholic School in Cobourg**. It was held in a small frame building on Ball Street but grew quickly and moved to University Avenue in 1883, the year that the Sisters of St. Joseph from Toronto took charge.

In 1871, under Ryerson’s leadership, Ontario passed the first compulsory school law – an example that other provinces quickly followed. It provided for education in **English and French, and for both Catholics and Protestants**. Public schools were now to be **free to students and compulsory**, paid for by the Ontario government and the municipal taxpayers equally.



Possible locations of early Cobourg School Sections

School Sections placed on a current map indicate concentrations of residents in 1846