

General Board of Education, of not more than 7 persons; district school superintendents, charged with the inspection of schools; uniform texts. It also provided for the levying of school taxes. Dr. Egerton Ryerson, a giant in the field of education, became Chief Superintendent of Education under this Law. Among many other things, it was his duty to distribute the money from the Common School Fund, select texts, establish school libraries, recommend suitable plans for school buildings, and to decide complaints arising under the School Law. Until his retirement in 1876 Dr. Ryerson never ceased in his efforts toward the improvement of education. He it was who established the principle that education is the business of the state, and not that of the individual, the family or the church.

The School Law passed in 1850 was an important milestone, for the Legislature decreed that the people should have the option of maintaining or abolishing the monthly school fee. By 1860 nearly three-quarters of the common schools were free by voluntary action of the taxpayers, and in 1871 all elementary schools were made free by the School Law Improvement Act. Also, by the 1850 School Law the General Board of Education was changed to the Council of Public Instruction, and provision was made for the annual retirement of one trustee in rural areas and of half the trustees in urban centres. Annual legislative grants of \$3,000 for the support of school libraries was provided for.

In connection with these libraries, no facilities for the production of books were yet available in Upper Canada, and at Dr. Ryerson's instigation the Government approved the establishment of an Educational Book Depository in the Education Office at Toronto, which began to function in 1853. Here books, texts, etc., which had been purchased by the Government in England, might be obtained at cost. When an order exceeded \$5.00 the Government made a grant of 75%, and in 1854 this was increased to 100%. Dr. Ryerson circularized the school trustees and municipal authorities of the province, supplying lists of books obtainable. Municipal Councils also had the right to establish libraries and to tax the inhabitants therefor, for the Government's intent was that everybody should use the libraries in an effort to improve the level of education.

A library was in existence in Hungerford by 1858. This was referred to in Council minutes as the "Township Library". It was apparently supervised by John Johnston, the Local Superintendent of Education. In a letter dated February 16, 1859, Mr. Johnston wrote to Dr. Ryerson "in respect to the library, through delays of the Council the books were not loaned out till the 14th of July (of 1858). Since then I attended every Saturday and have loaned out 669 volumes to