

1321. The census returns gave 112 universities and classical colleges in Canada in 1891. They were distributed as follows: British Columbia, 5; Manitoba, 5; New Brunswick, 5; Nova Scotia, 10; Ontario, 34; Prince Edward Island, 2; Quebec, 51. Of boarding schools for young ladies, the census returned 318, with 15,302 inmates. The number of persons giving their occupation as teachers was 21,851, showing an increase of 2,619 in ten years. There was a decrease of 60 male teachers, and an increase of 2,679 female teachers. The universities and classical colleges showed an increase of 27, and the young ladies' boarding schools an increase of 44 in the number of schools, and of 2,238 in the number of inmates.

There is, of course, considerable difference in many details in the public school systems in force in the various provinces, though they are all based on the principle of free education, the funds being supplied by local taxation and government grants.

1322. In Ontario the school system is under the control of the Minister of Education, who is a member of the Provincial Government for the time being. In the other provinces there are superintendents and boards of education, who report to the respective provincial secretaries. In Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, British Columbia and Prince Edward Island the schools are purely undenominational. In British Columbia "the highest morality is to be inculcated, but no religious creed or dogma taught." In the other three provinces religious exercises are permitted, but no children can be compelled to be present against the wishes of their parents. In Manitoba the schools were Protestant and Roman Catholic, but an Act was passed by the Manitoba House of Assembly, during the session of 1890, providing for the abolition of separate schools—all public schools to be non-sectarian, and religious exercises to be at the option of the school trustees of the district, subject to the regulations of the advisory board. That Act has been the subject of great controversy still unsettled. In Quebec the schools are Protestant and Roman Catholic, and education is based on religious teaching, the Roman Catholic catechism, and, in Protestant schools, the Bible being text books. In Ontario the schools are undenominational, but Protestants and Roman Catholics are allowed separate schools within certain limitations. Every public and high school is opened and closed with prayer and the reading of the Scriptures, but without comment or explanation. The trustees, however, and clergy of all denominations are empowered to make special arrangements for religious instruction. By this means the fullest facilities for religious instructions are given, without the assumption by the Government of any responsibility in regard to the instruction imparted.

1323. Subject to the approval of the Provincial Government, all regulations for the public and high schools are made by the Minister of Education. These schools are under the control of local boards of trustees, elected by the ratepayers, and are allowed to have none but certificated teachers. Education of children between the ages of 7 and 13 is compulsory for not less than 100 days in the year, but the law is by no means as strictly enforced as is desirable in the educational interests of the province. The following table gives particulars respecting the public schools of Ontario in the years 1877 to 1894, Roman Catholic separate schools being included:—