

by the Government, would result in doing great good for the people of Ontario."

MODEL SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS.

Mr. MacIntosh presented the report of the Committee on model Schools and teachers, which was as follows:—1. That as teaching is a profession, its members require professional training, and that no teacher should receive a certificate who has not received such training. 2. That in order to provide such training, some existing public school in each electoral division of the county, elected by the Council of Public Instruction, on the recommendation of the Public School Inspector, be constituted a Model School, and that all candidates for third class certificates who have not previously taught a public school for three years, be required to receive a training as pupil teacher in some such Model for that period. 3. That the headmasters of said Model Schools be first-class certificated teachers of at least five years' standing. 4. That Teachers' Institutes be established in each county. 5. That each County Teachers' Association having regular meetings at least quarterly, be constituted a Teachers' Institute. 6. That an Inspector of Teachers' be appointed, whose duty it shall be to visit each Institute at least annually, and conduct its proceedings during the whole of one of its sessions. The report was adopted.

TOWNSHIP BOARDS V. SCHOOL SECTION BOARDS.

Mr. Jas. Turnbull, B. A., read a paper on the above subject. He remarked that it would be unjust to undervalue the services which the present School Section Boards have rendered to the Province in the cause of education. The following is a recapitulation of the supposed disadvantages and advantages in the Township Board system:—The change has not been demanded by the mass of the people. The difficulty in making a proper division of school property. The lack of a suitable distribution of the trustees, and consequent neglect and favouritism. Poor and small sections assisted by the more wealthy part of the township. Let what is considered by some well enough alone. A desire to retain power, and a fear that the new Board would not take sufficient interest in all the schools. Advantages:—Economy in time and money and in the number of school officers. The convenience to parents by the abolishing of section boundaries. The saving of expenditure in having a sufficient number of school-houses, and no more, in each township, thus effecting a saving in the erection of buildings, keeping them in repair, with their grounds, &c., and economy in the number of teachers employed. The permanency of teachers in their position, tending to increased efficiency in the schools and a saving of time on the part of the pupils. An impartial tribunal, from which the teacher will never fail to secure justice, which he does not always receive at the hands of the present Boards. Payment of salary quarterly. Teachers' residences. Increased remuneration and consequent adherence to the profession, if not for life at least for a greater length of time than is usual on the part of many at present. The example of many of the States of the Union, which have adopted the system with excellent results, there being no tendency to return to the old system. Increased zeal on the part of inspectors, and more efficient supervision in conjunction with the Board in each township. A superior school in each township, to which the older pupils could be promoted, introducing the principle of township competitive examinations, and serving, to some degree, as a sort of Normal and Model School for the whole township. A vote of thanks was unanimously passed to Mr. Turnbull for the able paper read.

A discussion ensued. The subject was considered an important one. There were many practical objections to the present Board system, but there were a few obstacles in the way of changing it. Mr. Inspector Carlyle, of Oxford, said if there was a change it would be the emancipation of trustees and teachers. The schools were at the mercy of local prejudice, the teachers were under the thumb of the children, backed up by parents, who in their turn make the trustees back them up. Mr. Inspector Groat said he felt very earnest on this question. If there was a change in the present system the people would have more control over the schools than they now had. There were not only local prejudice but local differences in having a change. He spoke of two trustees employing a teacher two years in a school against the wishes of nine-tenths of the people in the place. Until they could show the people the benefit of a change, they would not get rid of the present system, which he contended was working against the efficiency of schools, and there was no question but the money voted for

schools was thrown away under the present system. He advocated a central Board. Mr. Inspector Smith spoke of the arbitrariness of trustees, and referred to the question of equalization of the assessment in townships for school purposes, mentioning that in one township the people were paying nine mills towards the school, whereas in adjoining townships the people only paid one and a half mills, and had the same school accommodation. Several other speakers condemned the present system, and considered that there should be an immediate change.

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL.

Mr. Inspector Fotheringham moved, and Mr. McCallum seconded the following resolution:—"That the evils of irregular attendance and non-attendance at our Public Schools throughout the Province is of a most serious character, and demands immediate and stringent legislation for its removal."—Carried.

The following is a summary of the paper prepared by Mr. Fotheringham on the important question of school attendance:—"We in Ontario have flattered ourselves for years that we possess one of the best, if not the best, school system in the world; but when Dr. Ryerson speaks of the 38,535 who entered no school in 1871, as 'an ominous and humiliating item' in our school statistics, he neither uses too strong language nor does he exaggerate the figures. To show the probable return from our school expenditure, I have made several comparative estimates of work done in cities, towns, and villages on the one hand, and in counties on the other, and do not find the one much more satisfactory than the other; but as it may be urged that private schools and academies in cities, may make the percentage of attendance or non-attendance on instruction which I may bring forward less reliable, I shall confine myself to statistics of counties for the present; and, I fear, we shall find items 'ominous and humiliating' beyond what most have dreamt of. The school population of Ontario (from 5 to 16) in the counties in 1871 was 392,559; we may, as ascertained by facts and calculations, add one-fourth of this number to itself to get the population from 5 to 21. This will give us 490,700 in the counties. The number of all ages that entered school in 1871, was 358,895. This leaves 131,804, or 27 per cent., of the school population that did not enter any public school at all! Again, nearly 40,000 attended less than 20 days in the year; and over 73,000 attended under 50 days. All the education these 113,000 children could get in 20 or even 50 days amounts to nothing. We may therefore add over 22 per cent. more to the number deriving no benefit from the educational opportunities provided by the Public Schools. Altogether, therefore, nearly 50 per cent. of our young people are not being educated at the Public Schools. But in addition, over 95,000 in the counties attended under 100 days, and 76,000 attended under 150 days. We may therefore set down 171,000, or 34 per cent. more, as being only imperfectly educated, if regular attendance can be the test. 53,639 attended from 150 to 200 days, and 18,608 attended over 200 days. If these represent regular attenders and successful students, we have nearly 15 per cent. of the school population taking full advantage of the provision needful for popular instruction. To summarize, we have over 244,000 young people reaping little or no advantage from our Public Schools; we have over 171,000 taking only partial advantage; whilst only 72,247 are attending full or nearly full time, 50 per cent. getting little or no education; over 34 per cent. being imperfectly instructed; and 15 per cent. or 72,000 being educated at annual cost of \$1,383,340. What have we to say for 'this Canada of ours' now? 'Whither are we drifting?' Have we not been playing 'school,' like children, only on a gigantic scale? Have we not been working blindfold? Self-blinded? We have borrowed and purchased on all hands. It seems a matter of fact that our free schools have brought with them more irregularity and indifference than were apparent under the rate-bill system. This does not imply that free schools are a failure. It only proves that the necessary concomitants were not provided when the free school system was introduced. Now, we think the figures given above answer in the affirmative the question: Our educational system has failed, and terribly failed. Take, if you will, any ten young men or women, at random, who have taken a regular and ordinary course at a Public School, and how many of them will you find intelligent, fluent and correct in reading, speaking, and writing? Not more than one. Hardly that. Not only do children attend irregularly, but the instruction given has been mostly unat-